







**PROPHETS FOR AN AGE  
OF DOUBT**



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# PROPHETS FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT

By

A. E. BAKER

VICAR OF ST. MICHAEL LE BELFREY, YORK  
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## PREFACE

IT has been said by one of the greatest living Protestant thinkers that it is a law of the spiritual world that what costs little is worth little. The faith which overcomes the world is not the easy assurance which comes from accepting without question what your mother, or your Sunday-school teacher, or your parish priest, has told you about a loving Father in heaven, while ignoring the chaos and cruelty and beastliness that are in the world. Neither is it that rational confidence which comes from weighing all that reason and experience can say for and against the statement that there is a personal God, and deciding that on the whole there is more evidence *for* belief than against it. Faith which is based on evidence—on the world as it appears to us—will never overcome the world. It will fail us just when we need it most, when darkness and evil seem to be triumphant. The faith that will hold a man so that he can hold by it is a faith that defies evidence, that goes beyond experience, that faces all the facts and weighs all the opposing forces, and says: “Nevertheless, I believe in God. There is no restraint to Him to save by many or by few.” It is a sure certainty that can say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” It is the assurance that looks unafraid at the blackest

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darkness that life can bring, that feels all the agony of evil, that drains the cup of disillusionment, that presses the sharp thorns home to its heart, and still believes. That faith can cry out of its anguish, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and then go on to say, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

So you have the strange paradox of our Lord's teaching about faith, that He could emphasize its simplicity, thanking His Father that these things are hidden from the wise and understanding, and are revealed to babes, and yet could utter many stern warnings as to the difficulty of faith. "Strait is the gate, and narrow the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." All need faith, if they are to live well, but none can win a faith by which they can live unless they know that it is a pearl of great price, for which they must be prepared to give—all that they have. Thomas Huxley once said: "It does not take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all of him that there is."

It follows from this that the apologetic which will not only refute the doubter, but will also persuade him and win him, must be one which shows clearly that the difficulties have been faced, even if they have not been solved; that evil has not been lightly explained away, even if it cannot be explained; that there are no questions which we dare not ask. It is only a man who knows how hard it is to believe that God is love who will have any good news for an age of doubt. So the men whom I have chosen as prophets for this age are men who felt in their bones the compelling power of the doubts which they had to meet. There was the

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author of the book of Job, who had no alternative solution to the problem of suffering to take the place of the theory which he condemned and rejected. There was Socrates who, it was said, asked many questions, but would not himself offer an answer to them. There was Pascal who despaired, not only of man's reason, but also of his conscience, and based his appeal for faith in Christ on his conviction of the Fall of Man. And there was Newman, of whom Huxley said that if he had to compile a manual of infidelity he would go to Newman's *Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles* and to No. 85 of the "Tracts for the Times." Lonely, desperate, heart-broken—they are men who have torn hope out of the very heart of despair—who have said that human life is so terrible that a man can only keep his sanity if he insists—against all reason and all experience alike—that sin and suffering must work out to an end more blessed than could have been without them. It is not only that there is a budding to-morrow in midnight. It is that the darkness exists *in order that* the light may shine more glorious. Out of evil comes good. It has been said that *that* is the fact which we call God.

This book contains the Page Lectures for 1934 in the Berkeley Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut, but they have been revised and almost completely rewritten. I take this opportunity to thank Dr. W. P. Ladd, the Dean of Berkeley, for the invitation to visit the School and to deliver the lectures. I shall always remember with gratitude the kindness and courtesy, to Mrs. Baker and myself, of the Faculty and students, and of everybody connected with the School. They

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made our visit one of the happiest experiences of our lives.

Some of the material here used has appeared in the *Church Times*, and I thank the Editor of that paper for his courteous permission to reprint it. Two paragraphs on pages 209-210 are quoted from my *Christianity and Science in the Twentieth Century*, published by Eyre and Spottiswoode. I am grateful to Mr. Wilfrid Meynell for permission to quote Mrs. Meynell's poem, "The Two Questions," on p. 20, and to Canon S. L. Ollard for the quotations from *Dr. George Copeland's Letters*, which I have used in Chapter IV.

A. E. BAKER.

*August, 1934.*

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## JOB

THE book of Job is perhaps the earliest attempt, on any considerable scale, to grapple with the problem of human destiny. Quite probably, it is earlier than the great Athenian tragedies of the fifth century before Christ. It is a most mysterious book. Like Melchizedek, it is without ancestry and without descendants, and without any kindred. Not only is the author unknown, but there is no material, inside the book or outside it, on which we can base any guess as to who or what he may have been. The book stands alone, not only unlike any other book in the Old Testament, but entirely unlike any other book that was ever written. We may say that the Old Testament is a collection of books whose common characteristic is not only an unquestioning conviction that God exists, but also a uniquely warm devotion and loyalty to Him. This loyalty is rooted in His revelation of Himself in the history of the Hebrews as their God, Who had chosen them to be His people. All the fervent nationalism of an intensely patriotic people had been poured into their religion. God had loved Israel and hated Esau. He had fought for them against the Philistines with lightning and hail-storms. And when a more philosophical theology had interpreted less crudely the notion that God had chosen

Israel and made a covenant with them, even then the concrete devotion of that early religion was never left behind.

It is immensely significant, then, that there is no hint of this in the book of Job. A lofty monotheism is assumed—God controls lightning and storm and wind, He creates all things, and works His sovereign will in nature and in human life. But there is no hint of any profit or pre-eminence which comes from being a Hebrew. The existence of other gods is not a matter of argument. The religion of the book is monotheism, simple, pure, lofty, and unquestioned. And it is against this background, of unfaltering certainty that God is the almighty Creator of us all, that the problem of human destiny is posed. And the memorable fact is that the ultimate attitude towards this problem is agnostic—in the true sense of the word.

Man's life is brief and miserable. He hopes and works for the good things of this world, and his hopes are disappointed. He seeks for beauty, and to create it, and vulgarity, and insincerity, and mere prettiness dog his search. He seeks for truth, and the limitations of his senses, as well as of his intellect, the tyranny of the body, and the impatience of his mind, mean not only ignorance, but also error. He would like to do good to his fellows, but good intentions—spoiled by moral and intellectual and practical weaknesses in himself and others—only too often produce more harm than good. He seeks wealth, a means of security for a full life, of power in a world where competition is woven into the very stuff of evolution ; and suddenly he is cast down

into poverty. Above all, he seeks friendship, love—and not only the death of his loved ones, but also other changes and chances of this mortal life bring the anguish of heartbreak, an anguish the more piercing the higher and better a man is.

But the evil in human life is not only sorrow, loss, and disappointment. It is much more that catastrophe which we call sin. Selfishness ruins every thought as well as every act. It is the root of pride, cruelty, avarice, sloth, lust, and all the deadly sins. It plays havoc with all our life, personal, social, religious. And it is a deep, universal conviction of the human conscience that suffering and sin are connected. The conventional theory of these things is that suffering is the result, nay, the penalty, of sin. This is held more clearly and fundamentally in Hebrew religious thought than anywhere else that I know. Schleiermacher, indeed, said that *retribution* is the formative intuition of Judaism in exactly the same sense that forgiveness is the formative intuition of Christianity. Just as it is true that unless God forgives the sins of all them that truly repent the whole of Christianity falls to the ground, so it is true that unless suffering and loss are the punishment of sin—and, in the same way, happiness and prosperity are the reward of goodness and virtue—unless those are facts of experience, orthodox Judaism has no ground to stand on.

The classical statement of this theory is in the sanction attached to the second commandment. God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate Him, and shews

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mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments. That statement emphasizes the corporate character of retribution. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. There is much truth in that statement, of course. And it is difficult to conceive how it could be otherwise, so long as humanity is, physically and spiritually, a continuous entity, with one generation related to, and dependent upon, its predecessor. The father wastes his substance in self-indulgence, and the children's lives are narrowed by poverty. In 1914 old men made a war, and in 1934 young men are paying for it. More important than that, one generation achieves, or fails to achieve, a certain level of otherworldliness, sincerity, and unselfishness, and the next generation is born into that inheritance, moulded by the spiritual assumptions of its predecessors, before it knows to refuse the evil and to choose the good. The doctrine of original sin is only another way of saying that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. And in some sense, to some extent, it is a true statement.

The great prophets of the Exile, as is well known, were not satisfied that this was adequate to the facts. The catastrophe through which they lived was an event of unique importance in the history of religion, and in particular in the development which led up to the coming of Christ; the Old Testament has been rightly called the Epic of the Fall of Jerusalem. It was then that the individual was discovered and that life and religion became primarily individual concerns. Responsibility for one's own acts in the sight of God was pressed back

upon the individual conscience. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." That is from Deuteronomy, but it is underlined by Jeremiah: "They shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth have been set on edge . . . every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." And it was made even more explicit by Ezekiel: "Behold (saith the Lord God) all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." There is a great difference between the second commandment and Ezekiel, the difference between a corporate conception of sin and retribution and an individual conception. But it is still retribution. The Jew believed that God loves the righteous and hates the sinner, that He punishes the wicked with failure, disease, and poverty, and that He rewards the righteous with success, health, and prosperity.

That is the view of Job's friends, as is well known. Perhaps as good an example of it as can be taken is the speech of Eliphaz in the fifteenth chapter.

The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days . . .  
 A sound of terrors is in his ears;  
 In prosperity the spoiler shall come upon him. . . .  
 Distress and anguish make him afraid;  
 Because he has stretched out his hand against God,  
 And behaveth himself proudly against the Almighty. . . .  
 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue,  
 Neither shall their produce bend to the earth. . . .  
 For the company of the godless shall be barren,  
 And fire shall consume the tents of bribery.

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That view is still the conventional view, indeed, although there is little warrant to be found for it in experience. There is no reason to think that cheats never prosper, and it is probable that it is not always true that honesty is the best policy. Job, indeed, says in one place that God illtreats the righteous and the wicked alike :

The perfect and the wicked He bringeth to one end.  
And in another place he denies at length and in detail that the wicked are wretched.

Wherefore do the wicked live,  
Become old, yea, wax mighty in power ?  
Their seed is established with them  
And their offspring before their eyes.  
Their houses are made safe from fear,  
Neither is the rod of God upon them.  
Their bull gendereth, and showeth no loathing,  
Their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. . . .  
They end their days in prosperity. . . .  
Yet they said unto God, "Depart from us,  
For we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. . . ."  
How often is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out ?  
That their calamity cometh upon them ?

An even more serious weakness of this conventional view, however, is that it takes away from men the comfort of trust in God just when they need it most. It is not when the sun is shining, and life tastes good, that we need to be assured that God loves us and will never forsake us ; rather is it when life is shadowed and difficult. To teach that calamity is a proof of divine displeasure is to cut the nerve of courage.

Some time ago I knew a woman who for many years had suffered great pain as a result of some obscure gastric trouble. At last her doctors advised her that an opera-

tion would cure her. She underwent the operation and seemed to be getting well. Then something went wrong, a second operation became necessary, and it became plain to everybody, including the poor woman herself, that she was dying. One day she said to me, "I must be a very great sinner for God to punish me like this." Just then, when as never before she needed the conviction of God's Fatherly providence, she was robbed of it by this Jewish survival, the idea that suffering and misfortune are a proof of God's displeasure.

The teaching of our Lord is quite explicit on this point. So far from it being true that God punishes the wicked with pain and misery, and rewards the righteous with health and prosperity, the fact is that *He makes no difference* between the righteous and the sinner. He sends His rain on the just and the unjust, and causes His sun to shine on the evil and the good. What does that mean? It is fashionable in some quarters to say that nature is indifferent to all human values. She cares nothing at all whether a man ruins his health by self-indulgence or by self-sacrificing work for others.

Streams will not curb their pride  
 The just man not to entomb,  
 Nor lightnings go aside  
 To give his virtues room.  
 Nor is that wind less rough that blows  
 A good man's barge.

My old teacher, Dr. McTaggart, used to say that Nature never punishes. She is indifferent to the distinctions that seem so important to us. She sheds her bacteria abroad, with magnificent impartiality, on the man whose careless neglect allowed the drains to go wrong, on the



man who has come to put the drains right, and on the child playing near who was not consulted in the matter. The children's books of an earlier generation used to say that the boy who went out without his father's leave was struck by lightning. Now we think that the lightning would have struck any boy on the same spot, even though he had been armed by the most ample parental authority.

This impartiality of nature is a fact which Jesus recognizes. He does not look at life through the rose-tinted glasses of sentiment, but with the terrible sanity of one who hated unreal words and vain thoughts. But he interpreted what he saw, not as indifference, but as impartiality. He interpreted nature, not in terms of law, but in terms of love. Jesus taught that God loves the evil and the good, the just and the unjust. Put anthropomorphically, as Dr. Oman has put it, God pursues His wandering child with His generous kindness, He overcomes his disobedience with love. He shows His love to men by leaving them free to choose the good because it is good, not shadowing their freedom with His omnipotence, nor warping their conscience by fear of punishment nor hope of reward.

If it were true that God punishes the wicked with failure and disease and poverty, and rewards the righteous with health and success and prosperity, it would mean that the good man thinks that there are things which are a greater blessing than goodness, and that God thinks so. If we will but face it, we could not worship a God who rewarded purity and unselfishness

and courage with a fat bank balance, and lusty health, and an eminent place in society. Are such things prizes that the righteous value? It is significant that the prize in the Olympic games in classical Greece was—a crown of wild olive. They said that it was because Zeus was too poor to afford a crown of gold, but that was not the reason. It was because the contest and the victory—the contest as well as the victory—were prize enough, were themselves the prize. And can we not see that all the good is taken out of goodness if it receive any reward other than itself? Similarly, if we will face it, we could not worship a God who punished the sinner with disease, or poverty, or loss. Sin is itself its own terrible penalty. To add any other punishment would be immoral. It would be to deny the absoluteness of the distinction between right and wrong. Sin is an inner separation from God; there can be no worse punishment than that. That is hell. In the words of the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Divines: Hell is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

Our Lord sees deeper than that, however. The absoluteness of God's love is seen in the fact that He loves good and evil alike. It is not according to man's deserving, but according to His *property*, which is always to love all men, everywhere. He does not discriminate against the sinner. His love *leaves man free* to become what God intends him to be. It is almost true to say that the Christian doctrine of suffering is that it is too high a privilege for any who do not share the life of God as it is revealed in Jesus Christ.

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"A riddling world!" one cried.

"If pangs must be, would God that they were sent  
To the impure, the cruel, and passed aside  
The holy innocent!"

But I, "Ah no, no, no!"

Not the clean heart transpierced; not tears that fall  
For a child's agony; nor a martyr's woe;  
Not these, not these appal.

"Not docile motherhood,  
Dutiful, frequent, closed in all distress;  
Not shedding of the unoffending blood;  
Not little joy grown less;

"Not all-benign old age  
With dotage mocked; not gallantry that faints  
And still pursues; not the vile heritage  
Of sin's disease in saints;

"Not these defeat the mind.  
For great is that abjection, and august  
That irony. Submissive we shall find  
A splendour in that dust.

"Not these puzzle the will;  
Not these the yet unanswered question urge.  
But the unjust stricken; but the hands that kill  
Lopped; but the merited scourge;

"The sensualist at fast;  
The merciless felled; the liar in his snares.  
The cowardice of my judgment sees, aghast,  
The flail, the chaff, the tares."

The incarnate life of Christ is the supreme expression of the divine privilege of suffering. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. It is not easy to say all that that means, but it certainly means that suffering is a great privilege for those who are worthy of it. "We see Jesus . . . for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour": that does not mean that the

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glory and honour are a result or a reward of the suffering, but that His suffering is the crown of glory and honour. We have to find room in our conception of the goodness of the world as it is controlled by the love of God for the fact that He permitted Jesus to suffer on the cross. That suffering was a revelation of the Father's love. But it cannot be a revelation of the Father's loving care for you and me unless it was also, and in its actual happening, a revelation of the Father's love for His only begotten Son. There, in the mystery of the crucifix, is the Christian answer to the problem of the world's suffering.

Five hundred years before Jesus lived the problem was stated in the character and career of Job. Job is presented as a man whose position, reputation, and character are all great. We can hardly but be reminded, as we read it, of Aristotle's portrait of the great-souled man, whose deserts and claims are alike great. Job is saved from the self-centredness which is the bad side of Aristotle's ideal by the reference to God and His judgment, who sees men's thoughts; this we are never allowed to forget in the description of his character. The author of the book excels himself in the account of the happiness of this great man. God watched over him, and he walked by His light. He was in the prime of life, and the divine friendship was on his house. He was happy in children, in overflowing prosperity, and in amazing blessings. When he sat in the place of judgment, the young stood back out of respect, the aged stood up in their places, princes became silent and the voices of the nobles were hushed. Men waited eagerly

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for him to express his opinion, and when he had spoken the discussion ceased. His approval encouraged the diffident ; he was a king among men, whose company was always welcomed.

Job deserved the position that he held in the community, for with sympathy and courage he stood for what was just, especially to those whom in these days we might call the "under dogs."

I was eyes to the blind,  
And feet was I to the lame.  
I was a father to the needy :  
And I took trouble to understand the case even of those  
who were not personally known to me.  
I broke the teeth of the oppressor, and plucked the prey  
from his jaws.

It is characteristic of the pre-Christian world that the author puts these statements into the mouth of Job himself. He sees nothing surprising in the fact that a good man should recognize and admit his own goodness. But the conviction of his own worth is an essential element in Job's problem. To his friends' assertion of the conventional theory of suffering—that it is divine retribution for sin—he replies, not with an alternative theory, but first of all with the assertion of his own innocence. At all costs, he must insist on that.

Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak,  
And let come on me what will.  
I will take my flesh in my teeth,  
And put my life in my hand !  
Behold, He will slay me ; I have no hope ;  
Nevertheless, I will maintain my ways before Him.

In this, of course, Job is right. Man's fundamental

intuitions of value—of truth, beauty, and, above all, of goodness—are indeed fundamental. In them he touches ultimate reality, or he has no access to reality at all. To deny the findings of his conscience would be to put out the eyes of his soul, so that he can never see God at all. And this is true although his conscience is not infallible.

Job had feared God, Who sees his ways and numbers his steps. He had determined, therefore, not to sin even in thought. If he has sinned, then it will be just that his enterprises shall fail. If he has sinned with another's wife, then let his own wife be dishonoured, for adultery is a sin which destroys a man completely. He does not treat his slaves unjustly, otherwise he could not face God without confusion, Who made his slave and himself. He has considered the poor and the widow, and has shared his food with the orphan.

If I have seen any perish through lack of clothing,  
Or that the needy had no covering,  
If he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep,  
If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,  
Because I saw that I could win a verdict in the courts,  
Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder-blade,  
And my arm be broken from the bone.

He has not trusted in money, nor rejoiced because his wealth was great. He has not worshipped any but the true God. He has not rejoiced at the downfall of those who hated him, nor exulted when calamity came upon them, nor prayed for God's curse to slay them. His hospitality even to strangers and travellers had been princely in its generosity. He was no hypocrite, hiding

his sin through fear of public opinion. He protests his innocence always.

And therefore Job had been confident that his prosperity would last. He counted on a long and happy life. He was like a tree planted by the rivers of water, his reputation was untarnished, and his strength untouched by decay. But calamity found him. His great possessions were carried off by raiding bands or destroyed by lightning ; his sons and daughters were killed in a great storm ; and this all in one day—with sudden swiftness. Then there came upon him the dreadful black leprosy or elephantiasis—so that his very physical life was a misery to him—and he was banished from associating with his fellow-men. He lay on the village refuse-heap with the street curs. He is despised by the vile, the dregs of uncivilized humanity make a mock of him. He is in agony, his disease gives him no peace, he is utterly outcast, despising himself as others despise him. His wife loses her faith in God, and tempts him also to atheism. But he holds fast to his confidence in Him in whom he has trusted. “ Shall we receive good from the Lord, and shall we not receive evil ? ” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

He exhausts the resources of language in describing his misery. Life is a curse, and he would welcome death.

There the wicked cease their raging ;  
And there the weary be at rest.  
There the captives are at ease together,  
They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.  
The small and the great are there ;  
And the slave is free from his owner.

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His life is filled with the trouble that God sends.

For the arrows of the Almighty are present with me,  
And my spirit drinketh the poison of them :  
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.

He prays that God will kill him.

Oh that I might have my request :  
And that God would grant me the thing that I long for !  
And that it would please God to crush me ;  
That he would put forth His hand and cut me off !

His lot is hopeless.

If I seek Hell as my home,  
And have made my bed in darkness,  
If I have called the pit my father,  
And the worm my mother and my sister,  
Where, then, is my hope ?  
And who can see my success ?

God has overwhelmed him.

He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass,  
And hath set darkness in my paths.  
He hath stripped me of my glory,  
And taken the crown from my head.  
He hath broken me down on every side, and I am gone ;  
And mine hope hath he plucked up like a tree.  
He hath also kindled His wrath against me,  
And He counted me unto Him as one of His adversaries.  
His troops come on together, and cast up their way against  
me.

They camp round about my tent.  
He hath put my brethren far from me.  
And mine acquaintance are wholly estranged from me,  
My kinsfolk have failed,  
And my familiar friends have forgotten me.  
They that dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a  
stranger :



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I am an alien in their sight.  
I call unto my servant, and he giveth me no answer.  
I entreat him with my mouth.  
My breath is strange to my wife.  
And I am loathsome to the children of my mother's womb.  
Even young children despise me ;  
If I arise they speak against me.  
All my intimate friends abhor me.  
And they whom I loved are turned against me.  
My bone cleaveth to my skin,  
And I am escaped with my flesh in my teeth.  
Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends ;  
For the hand of God hath touched me !

It is the peculiar quality of the problem of suffering as presented in the mind of Job that he never for one moment doubts the existence of God. A typical modern man who suffered one half that came upon Job would cry out, " There cannot be a God, or such things could not happen." It is true that the very recognition that evil is a problem implies some more or less conscious belief in the rationality and goodness of the universe. The consistent sceptic or materialist would not feel that evil is a problem at all. To say " Such things ought not to be " means a fundamental faith in the value and rationality of things. It is significant, as the Archbishop of York has pointed out, that although men have spent much time on the problem of evil, no one has yet raised the problem of good. We do not ask, " Why is there value in the universe ? Why are there happiness and moral good in human life ? " That is because there is something deeper than our doubts.

But in Job this invincible confidence that the world

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has a meaning becomes explicit. The moderns cannot find God. Some would believe in Him if they could, some rejoice that they are delivered from an archaic prejudice and from all the varied evils that are associated with it, but some do not care, one way or the other; they are not interested. But this book contains, as is well known, one of the classical accounts of religious experience.

Now a thing was secretly brought to me,  
And mine ear received a whisper thereof.  
In thoughts from the visions of the night,  
When deep sleep falleth on men,  
Fear came upon me, and trembling,  
Which made all my bones to shake.  
Then a spirit passed before my face;  
The hair of my flesh stood up.  
It stood still, but I could not discern the appearance thereof.  
A form was before mine eyes:  
There was silence, and I heard a voice saying,  
Shall mortal man be more just than God?  
Shall a man be more pure than his maker?

It may be that Job's unshakable certainty of God is rooted in this and similar experiences, but whatever be the reason the question of the existence of God is never raised in this book which, in this at least, is typical of the Bible. Job's problem is precisely here, that he believes in a good God who seems to do, or permit, so much evil.

I cry unto Thee, and Thou dost not answer me,  
I stand up, and Thou lookest at me,  
Thou art turned to be cruel to me.  
With the might of Thy hand Thou persecutest me.  
Thou liftest me up to the wind, Thou causest me to ride  
upon it,  
And Thou dissolvest me in the storm.

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For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death  
And to the house appointed for all living.  
Surely against a ruinous heap He will not put forth His  
hand,  
Though it be to my destruction I may utter a cry because  
of these things.

When I looked for good, then evil came ; and when I  
waited for light, there came darkness.

Why does God search him out ? Even if he has done  
wrong, must He pursue him for ever ?

What is man, that Thou magnifiest him,  
And that Thou directest Thine attention to him,  
And that Thou visitest him every morning,  
And triest him every moment ?  
How long wilt Thou not look away from me,  
Nor let me alone while I swallow down my spittle ?  
If I have sinned, what do I unto Thee,  
O Thou keeper of men ?  
Why hast Thou set me as a thing for Thee to strike  
against,  
So that I am a burden to myself ?  
And why dost Thou not take away my transgression,  
And cause mine iniquity to pass away ?  
For now I shall lie down in the dust ;  
And Thou wilt seek me diligently, but I shall not be.

Man that is born of a woman  
Is of few days and full of misery.  
He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down :  
He fleeth also like a shadow, and continueth not.  
And upon such a one dost Thou open Thine eyes,  
And bring him into judgment with Thee.

Job's real agony is that there on his ash-heap he cannot  
make *sense* of his torments. God's ways are meaning-  
less.

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He that erreth, and he that leadeth into error are His,  
Who leadeth counsellors away naked,  
And Who maketh judges fools.  
The perfect and the wicked He bringeth to one end.

They lie down alike in the dust,  
And the worm covereth them.

There is no one to judge Job's charges against God.

For He is not a man, as I am, that I should talk with Him,  
That we should come together in judgment ;  
There is no umpire betwixt us  
That might lay His hand upon us both.

The contribution that the book of Job makes to our understanding of suffering has three aspects. First, it is plain matter of fact that loss and disappointment and disease do help a man to see, more clearly than otherwise he might do, where his treasure is. When health and prosperity and success are taken away, a man realizes that, so far from being left with nothing, what remains is more precious than what he has lost. It is clear to the reader of the book, more perhaps than to Job himself, that the quality of Job's faith has been tested, and that it has come out purer and stronger for the testing. Perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil, he is sensitive, not only for his own moral and religious integrity, but also for that of others. When the hedge is taken away from about him and his family and possessions, and utter disaster comes, he receives it from the hand of God. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." And He thanks God for the gift, and for taking it away. "Blessed be the name of the Lord." The Catholic religion teaches that such complete sub-

mission to, and acceptance of, the will of God, is the essence of the perfect human life.

William Law has given incomparable expression to this doctrine in the fifteenth chapter of *A Serious Call*, in a passage so magnificent that I venture to quote it at some length.

“Would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most, or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, and justice; but it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God willeth, who receives everything as an instance of God’s goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it.

“All prayer and devotion, fastings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all sacraments and ordinances, are but so many means to render the soul thus divine and conformable to the will of God, and to fill it with thankfulness and praise for everything that comes from God.

“If any one would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness, and all perfection, he must tell you to make a rule to yourself to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For it is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing.

“I exhort you to this method in your devotion, that every day may be made a day of thanksgiving, and that the spirit of murmur and discontent may be unable to enter into the heart which is so often employed in singing the praises of God.”

This is quite clear in the book of Job. His wife tempts him to curse God, so that He may strike him dead if He will. But His answer shows complete reconciliation with the will of God. “What? Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?” Even in the midst of his anguish, he

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appeals to none other than God Himself against God's treatment of him.

All the days of my warfare would I wait,  
Till my release should come.

He breaketh me with breach upon breach ;  
He returneth upon me like a warrior.

My face is red with weeping,  
And on my eyelids is thick darkness ;  
Although there is no violence in my hands,  
And my prayer is pure.

O earth, cover not thou my blood,  
And let my cry have no resting-place.  
Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven,  
And He that voucheth for me is on high.

My friends are my scorers :

Unto God mine eye droppeth tears ;

That he would decide for a man in his contest with God.

The Adversary puts the challenge to God : Does Job serve God for nought ? He does. That is the meaning of the prologue, read in the light of the whole book.

Then, secondly, there are four amazing chapters—among the most splendid things in all literature—which contrast the ignorance and weakness of Job, his short life and lack of understanding, with the creative wisdom and almighty power, the eternity and the majesty, of God. By words spoken without knowledge Job has “darkened counsel,” he has made the cosmos, the divine order, look like chaos. He simply does not know. Was he there, at the Creation,

When the morning stars sang together,  
And all the sons of God shouted for joy ?

PROPHETS FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT

Does he know the decree by which God rules the sea,  
saying,

Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further ;  
And here shall thy proud waves rest ?

Is it Job who commands the dawn to snatch away the  
darkness like a blanket, shaking out the wicked to run  
from the light they dread ? Does he know the dwell-  
ing-place of the light, and the house of the dark ? Is  
he so old that he was present when they were made ?

Hath the rain a father ?  
Or who hath begotten the drops of dew ?  
Out of whose womb came the ice ?  
And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it ?

Does Job know ? Is it his power which is revealed  
in the order of heaven ?

Dost thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades,  
Or loose the bands of Orion ?  
Dost thou lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season ?  
Or dost thou guide the Bear with her train ?

Or is it Job who provides food for all living ?

Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lioness ?  
Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions ?  
When they couch in their dens,  
And abide in the covert to lie in wait ?  
Who provideth for the raven his food,  
When his young ones cry unto God,  
And wander to seek for meat ?

It is not Job who feeds the wild-ass, neither can he  
tame the antelope. Does the hawk soar by his wisdom,  
or the eagle mount up at his command ? No wonder  
that Job is abased at the realization of his own insigni-  
ficance. He can no longer contend with God.

It has seemed to some that the author merely gives up the task he has set himself. He allows Job to be bullied into submission by the sight of God's power. He has not an arm like God, nor can he thunder with His voice. Excellency and dignity and honour and majesty belong to God, not to man. It is His anger that abases the proud and brings him low, and treads down the wicked where they stand. When Job can do that he will be able—not indeed to create and sustain the world, but to save himself. As it is, he is nothing before God. The impression of the utter contrast, the absolute gulf, between God and man becomes even deeper as the author represents God describing for Job some of those amazing creatures whose existence and behaviour seem to have no possible part in any reasonable plan of things. There is the ostrich, silly and cruel, tremendously swift, though she cannot fly. God created the hippopotamus when He made man; who will dare to attack him with his enormous strength? And who will take the crocodile?

When he raiseth himself, the mighty are afraid :  
 By reason of consternation they are beside themselves.  
 If one lay at him with the sword, it cannot avail ;  
 Nor the spear, the dart, nor the pointed shaft.  
 He counteth iron as straw,  
 And brass as rotten wood.  
 The arrow cannot make him flee :  
 Slingstones are turned with him into stubble.  
 Clubs are counted as stubble :  
 He laugheth at the rushing of the javelin.

He maketh the deep to boil like a pot :  
 He maketh the sea like ointment.



## PROPHETS FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT

He maketh a path to shine after him ;  
One would think the deep to be hoary.

Upon earth there is not his like,  
That is made without fear.

He beholdeth everything that is high ;  
He is king over all the sons of pride

Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

I know that Thou canst do all things,  
And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.

I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear ;  
But now mine eye seeth thee,  
Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent  
In dust and ashes.

The creative energy of God not only sustains what man understands, and what is useful to him, but goes beyond man's knowledge and reasoning. There is much in the universe of which we cannot make sense. Perhaps man will never be able to understand it ; there may always be a great darkness round our little patch of light. That ought not to surprise us, for God is infinite in wisdom and goodness as well as in power. We do not know enough of creation to pass judgment on it ; that is part, at least, of the meaning of these last chapters of Job. If we saw it all, the goal of the process, and not merely the details of it, it may be we should know that it is worth the price that has to be paid. As Dostoievski said, the final rest that remaineth for the people of God may be so blessed that we shall recognize that the agony and blood and tears have not been too much. "I count that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." We do not know enough to

pass judgment. Certainly we do not know enough to condemn. It does not follow that we have not sufficient grounds for hope. We can see that sorrow and suffering, and even sin, may be necessary parts of a larger experience which is itself good, and not evil. But it cannot be seriously maintained that experiences in themselves good—the disinterested joy in truth and in its discovery, the appreciation of supreme art, the love which respects another's personality and seeks its good—may be recognized as actually evil when viewed as parts of a larger whole. We know enough to hope.

Thirdly, in all his afflictions, Job had God, and clung to Him. God Himself is the righteous man's exceeding great reward. The reality of religious experience is, of course, the ground of man's hope of immortality, as distinct from the mere thought of continued existence in Sheol or Hades, a thought which moves men to dread rather than hope. As Professor John Baillie has said, in his very illuminating book *And The Life Everlasting*, if the individual can commune with God, he must matter to God. And if he matters to God, he must share God's eternity. God cannot be conceived as scrapping what is precious in His sight. The interest of religion is "not in continuance of the finite, but in fellowship with the Infinite." The Archbishop of York has stated the same truth effectively, in his Drew Lecture on Immortality. "The great aim of all true religion is to transfer the centre of interest and concern from self to God. Until the doctrine of God in its main elements is really established, it would be definitely dangerous to reach a developed doctrine of immortality. . . . If my main

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concern in relation to things eternal is to be with the question what is going to become of *me*, it might be better that I should have no hope of immortality at all, so that at least as I look forward into the vista of the ages my Self should not be a possible object of primary concern. . . . Except as an implicate in the righteousness and love of God, I cannot see that immortality is a primary religious interest at all."

There is no definite belief in immortality in the book of Job. The whole problem of innocent suffering is argued on a this-worldly basis. But the certainty of God as One who cares for individuals—as He who cares for Job—leads in one moment of exaltation to a flash of insight which *knows* that death is not the end of such loving care. The meaning of the Hebrew is obscure, and is still matter of scholarly controversy ; I give what seemed to the late Dr. A. S. Peake to be the most probable translation.

I know that my Vindicator even now lives  
And after my death He will arise upon the earth,  
And after the loss of this my skin, which has been destroyed,  
Without my flesh shall I see God  
Whom I shall see on my side,  
And my eye shall behold, and not as a stranger.

Even this thought overwhelms him, and he continues :

My reins are consumed within me.

God was his comfort when all else was taken from him, and the hope by which he lived. The fundamental meaning of this sublime book is summed up in what is certainly a mistranslation, but just as certainly an inspired mistranslation. " Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

## SOCRATES

**N**OW we pass to one of the greatest and most baffling figures, most attractive and elusive, in the whole story of humanity. Few men have left so vivid an impression on the consciousness of the centuries as has Socrates. And there are few teachers of whom it is so difficult to be certain that we understand them aright.

Socrates was born in Athens about 470 B.C., and he was put to death in 400–399. His youth was passed in the age of Pericles, the most bewilderingly brilliant time in the whole history of human culture. It was a brief but exceedingly glorious period of supreme greatness and achievement. At the head of the Greek cities, Athens had defeated the Persian Empire at Marathon in 490 and, ten years later, in the “crowning mercy” of the naval fight at Salamis. That achievement was possible only because Athens—people and leaders alike—thought no sacrifice too great in the cause of honour. It was one of the great crises in the history of the world, for it made possible what we mean by European culture.

Athens was a State of the size and population of an English county. Her small empire gave her freedom and economic independence at a critical time. Her constitution was a democracy resting on slavery. This

was essentially bad and impermanent. But combined with a very simple standard of living among the citizens—fruit and vegetables and nuts, with pork as a very great luxury!—it provided leisure for culture and, particularly, for discussion. Five hundred years later their character was described: "All the Athenians and foreign visitors to Athens occupied themselves with nothing else than repeating or listening to the latest novelty."

Pericles, the most perfect orator that had ever lived, drew to Athens the most cultured men of the time. He made the city the spiritual and intellectual centre of the Greek world, and a treasure city of the greatest art. Socrates saw the building of the Parthenon from its foundations. Pheidias was beginning the perfect century of classical Greek sculpture. And Athens spent more on producing the great dramas than on all the wars which saved her from destruction. Four of the world's supreme dramatists were writing during the life of Socrates: Aeschylus, grave in his simplicity; Sophocles, with his serenely perfect grace; Euripides, sceptical, religious, with a passion for righteousness; and Aristophanes, mocking even the greatest of his contemporaries. Socrates saw the first performances of the *Antigone* and the *Hippolytus*. It was said that Euripides went to him for moral philosophy, and his plays were called "Socrates-welded" because Socrates had helped to write them. And he was the butt and boon-companion of Aristophanes. During all his life, indeed, he had the *entrée* into the most brilliant society in Athens. He was, spiritually, one of the most sensitive men who ever lived, and he lived in the age which for supremacy

in thought and art remains even yet the wonder and admiration of all civilized men.

He had a detailed knowledge of the Greek poets, particularly of Homer, and in his youth he was keenly interested in such science as there was in those days—mainly mathematical and cosmological speculation. He wanted to know the causes of things, why a thing comes into being, why it perishes, and why it exists. He knew that Anaxagoras had taught that the sun is a stone and that the moon is made of earth. He gave up all these speculations after a time, however, because he decided they were not profitable. He dreaded all unfounded claims to knowledge, and all knowledge that brought no benefit to the knower. He said that he had no gift for such things. It was because Socrates only discussed human concerns, and what makes a man a good man and a good citizen—a sphere in which ignorance is wretchedness—that Greek philosophy, until it came to an end in Plotinus, achieved far more in ethics than in metaphysics or natural science.

He was particularly disappointed that Anaxagoras—who had introduced Ionian science into Athens, but had been driven out by the intolerant democracy about the middle of the century—had made no use of his own assertion that it is reason or spirit which is the cause of all things. It was obvious to Socrates that the only way in which you can demonstrate why anything is what it is, is to show that it is best that it should be so; that is to say, that it is reason which arranges it. To search for “secondary causes” seemed to him as useful as to try to explain that a man is sitting in a chair

because his muscles and joints are as they are, and behave as they do, instead of saying that he is sitting in the chair because he wants to do so.

In the life of one dim, tremendous figure—Pythagoras, who had emigrated to Italy from the Eastern Aegean—religion, mathematics, and science were fused into one consuming passion. From his teaching and practice there grew communities, semi-religious, semi-scientific, wholly ascetic. Men felt that the task of seeking truth was more than a merely intellectual business ; it demanded a disciplined life. Socrates agreed with, and developed, this notion. The business of his life was philosophy, but it is only putting that in other words to say that he sought so to live as to be worthy of eternal life. It is no surprise, then, to discover that as a young man he succeeded Archelaus as the head of a community of the Pythagorean type.

The Greek satirists made great fun of the Pythagorean asceticism, its poverty, its dirt, its squalor. Quite in the manner of the Bishop of Birmingham's notorious attack on St. Francis, Aristophon calls these ancient philosophers "dirty fellows," and refers to their lice and old clothes, and to their lack of baths ; "and they eat vegetables and wash them down with water." Aristophanes, similarly, describes the followers of Socrates as

worthy men,  
So wise withal and learned—men so pure  
And cleanly in their morals, that no razor  
Ever profaned their beards ; their unwashed hides  
Ne'er dabbled in a bath, nor wafted scent  
Of odorous unguent as they passed along.

All his life Socrates practised and preached asceticism. He had only one cloak. He went barefoot—to spite the shoemakers, the comedians said. But the people who believed in him imitated him. Similarly, there were disciples of Newman whose almost idolatrous affection for him led them to imitate his smallest peculiarities. They dropped on their knees at the beginning of prayer, suddenly, as though the feet had been cut from under them—because Newman had done it. “The men with the little books,” they came to be called, for Newman had been short-sighted, and had held his prayer-book up close to his face. So the associates of Socrates imitated him. “He was a little fellow, who never wore any shoes, Aristodemus of Cydathenaeum. I think that in those days there was no one who was a more devoted admirer of Socrates.” So wrote Plato in the *Symposium*.

Physically, he was hard and very strong. He took only so much food as he could eat with a keen relish; and, to this end, he came to his meals so disposed that the appetite for his meat was the sauce to it. Every kind of drink was agreeable to him, because he never drank unless he was thirsty. Antipho once said to him: “You eat food, and drink drink, of the worst kind; you wear clothes, not only bad, but the same both winter and summer, and you continue shoeless and coatless.” The spirit of this asceticism seems to have been very similar to that of the Franciscans. He held that to want nothing is to be like the immortal gods, and to want as little as possible is to make the nearest approach to the gods. That he never asked for payment for



his teaching allowed him to maintain his independence,

So that he might not yield a servile soul  
Weighed down beneath the weight of golden coins.

He said that a man ought to refuse to take money for teaching people to be good, because this is the only sort of service which makes the person served desire to do one in return ; hence it is felt to be a good sign when this service that one has done is repaid to one in kind ; but when this is not so, the contrary is felt. The reason why his criticism of the Sophists was generally popular was in part at least that he gave his teaching free, while they made a charge. Accepting fees for teaching good conduct aroused strong Greek objections. The paid teacher may be a needy adventurer ; the needy adventurer may be an incompetent pretender ; the incompetent pretender soon develops into a charlatan ; and the charlatan becomes a trickster. That is how the portrait of them in Plato's dialogues has given the Sophists of ancient Greece a bad name, and sophism, sophistical, and sophistry, have become terms of abuse.

It was part of his asceticism that Socrates was always willing to eat and drink what was put before him. In the *Symposium*, Eriximachus says that he is able either to drink or to abstain and will not mind whichever they do. And at the end of the dialogue Plato describes how Socrates, after two nights' hard drinking, in which all others except Aristophanes and Agathon had succumbed, was still drinking out of a large goblet, and disputing as to the nature of tragedy and comedy.

Aristophanes, in *The Clouds*, has some jokes about

Socrates having a "thought shop." There is much that is interesting about these jokes. We are told, for example, that a thought has to be born like a child, and that any disturbance may cause a miscarriage. This means that the idea of Socrates being a sort of midwife of the soul was known to the Athenian public as early as 423 B.C. Just before his death he described himself in the same odd way. He was the son of a midwife, he said, and practised the same art. Artemis, the childless goddess, is the goddess of midwives, and only women who are incapable of bearing children themselves are midwives. Socrates tends souls in labour, not bodies. He seeks to test in every case whether the mind of a young man is producing a mere fancy, an imposture, or a real and genuine thought. "I have this in common with the midwives. I am sterile in point of wisdom, and it is a true reproach which has often been brought against me, that I question others but myself make no reply about anything, because I have no wisdom in me. . . . The god compels me to act as midwife, but has never allowed me to produce any wisdom myself."

This illustrates the vein of broad buffoonery in the humour of Socrates. He was, indeed, a figure of fun. He was one of the ugly men of history. Alkibiades refers to his amazing head! He was fat, deformed, short-legged, waddling like some strange duck—reminding men of a satyr or of some queer fish. But there was an unusual shrewdness in his humour; he saw things in proportion. His enemies called him "sly," using a word (from which "irony" is derived) which

is properly applied to foxes. Burnet says that the Scots word "canny" (not always a term of praise) comes nearest to the Greek. The "irony" of Socrates had originally a suggestion that he was a humbug, but he has claimed the word for his own, and to the modern man it takes its meaning from him more than it applies a description to him.

The complaint that he hints at when he says that he is like a midwife was often made against him: that he himself produced nothing. Those with whom he talked said that he would ask questions, but would not himself give any answers. They refused to believe that he had not an answer ready all the time, "up his sleeve," as we say. But that was an essential misunderstanding of him. His method was one of searching questions. Men found it impossible to sit beside him and not give an account of themselves, and of their beliefs. At his trial he said that he was a gadfly whom God had sent to rouse Athens, grown sluggish like some large horse. "For I never cease from settling upon you, as it were, at every point, and rousing and exhorting, and reproaching each man of you all day long." Hippias the Sophist said that Socrates laughed at others, questioning and confuting everybody, while he himself was unwilling to give a reason to anybody, or to give his opinion on any subject. Plato says that Socrates had no idea of how to make long speeches, but represents Alkibiades as saying that he was unique in asking questions.

This was his method: he followed wherever the argument led him. He applied the *dialectic*, which Zeno had used in mathematics, to questions of good and evil,

and to the problems of the beautiful and the true. The essence of the method is to start the argument, not by some assertion which the dialectician believes, or assumes, or proves, or can prove, to be true, but to start from what is granted or asserted by his opponents. In this strict sense of the word, Bishop Butler's method, in his famous *Analogy of Religion*, is dialectical. He starts from what was common ground between himself and his opponents, the Deists. They believed in God, Freedom, and Immortality. The method is in exact contrast to that of Descartes, who sought to doubt everything that could be doubted, and so to start from an unquestionable foundation. Zeno and Socrates begin by accepting some statement which their interlocutor asserts—something of which he is proud—and then try to lead him on, by skilful questions, to deduce from the original statement something which contradicts it, or which the opponent will not accept, or which is obviously absurd. The opponent is then persuaded to start again, with an amended statement, and once more the same fate befalls the unfortunate wretch.

This process was, of course, very unpleasant to those who were put through it, although perhaps not uninteresting to the onlookers. Protagoras and other Sophists, indeed, resented Socrates' sceptical method very much. But he followed where the argument led him, and they were usually forced to submit. Only those who were thoroughly grounded in Rationalism, indeed, could endure such treatment. Socrates points out that just as men become misanthropists—haters of their fellow-men—because they have been deceived again

and again when they have placed implicit and irrational confidence in a man who has seemed a friend, so they become haters of reasoning when they have believed some arguments to be true, and have afterwards seen some able debater pull them to pieces. One, however, is as wrong and discreditable as the other. The one comes from having tried to deal with men without understanding human nature, without knowing that there are few good people and few bad people. Similarly, in arguing, we have to realize, not that all reasoning is unsound, but that ours is not yet sound. Socrates himself believed in reasoning, and he believed that the justice, the beauty, and the temperance, for which he was looking, were really there to be found. It seemed to many, however, that this unceasing questioning was purely destructive, pulling to pieces the established moral beliefs, shaking down all that they held most valuable in life. But it was because he believed in truth that he attacked mere custom and convention. Only if Socrates had a firm belief that life and the world are fundamentally reasonable can he be acquitted of a scepticism as cruel as it was unprofitable.

Socrates was far from being a mere rationalist, however. There was a nervous element in his mind, and emotion and intuition played their part in his life and teaching. From his childhood he had had a sort of divine sign from God. It was a kind of voice which, whenever he heard it, always turned him back from something he was about to do, but never urged him to act. For example, it forbade him to take part in politics. It told him always what was to his personal disadvan-

## S O C R A T E S

tage ; he never appealed to it, so far as we know, on matters of right and wrong. When, at his trial, he allowed the jury to condemn him to death, rather than try to persuade them by arguments which seemed to him unworthy or contrary to the law, his voice was silent.

“ A wonderful thing has happened to me,” he says. “ The prophetic sign which I am wont to receive from the divine voice has been constantly with me in all things all through my life until now, opposing me in quite small matters if I were not going to act rightly. And now you yourselves see what has happened to me : a thing which might be thought, and is sometimes actually reckoned, the supreme evil. But the sign of God did not withstand me when I was leaving my house in the morning, nor when I was coming up hither to the court, nor at any point in my speech, when I was going to say anything ; though at other times it has often stopped me in the very act of speaking. But now, in this matter, it has never once withstood me, either in my words or in my actions. I will tell you what I believe to be the reason of that. This thing that has come upon me must be a good ; and those of us who think that death is an evil must needs be mistaken. I have a clear proof that this is so ; for my accustomed sign would certainly have opposed me if I were not going to fare well.”

It may help us to understand these words of Socrates if we compare his “ voice ” with the “ voices ” of St. Joan, as described by Mr. Bernard Shaw. St. Catharine and St. Margaret talked to her every day. She heard voices telling her what to do. They came from God. To the argument that they came from her imagination she replied, “ Of course. That is how the messages of God come to us.” Only for her voices she would lose all heart. It was in the bells that she heard her voices.

In the corner of the cathedral, where the bells come down from heaven, and the echoes linger, or in the fields, where they come from a distance, through the quiet of the countryside, her voices were in them : " Dear-child-of-God " ; " Be-brave-go-on " ; " I-am-thy-help " ; " God-will-save-France." And then St. Margaret and St. Catharine, and sometimes even the Blessed Michael, will say things that she cannot tell beforehand.

To the objection that she always gave very sensible reasons for doing what the Saints advise she replies that the voices came first, and she finds the reasons afterwards. At the trial the prosecution suggests that these apparitions were demons seeking her soul's perdition. Does not their command to her to wear men's dress prove that they are the voices of evil spirits? Would an angel of God give her such advice? Yes, she says. It is the plainest common sense. She lives among soldiers. She is in prison, guarded by the Earl of Warwick's men. Dressed as a soldier, she is safe. Dressed as a woman, they will think of her as a woman, and where will she be then? The command of the voices is right and good.

Mr. Shaw says that there are people in the world whose imaginations are so vivid that when they have an idea it comes to them as an audible voice, sometimes uttered by a visible figure. Sometimes these people are criminals or lunatics. But the inspirations and intuitions and unconsciously reasoned conclusions of genius sometimes assume similar illusions. Luther, Swedenborg, Blake saw visions and heard voices just as St. Francis and St. Joan did. The test of sanity is not the

normality of the method, but the reasonableness of the discovery. Joan must be judged a sane woman in spite of her voices because they never gave her any advice that might not have come from her own mother wit! (The conceit of Mr. Bernard Shaw is so boundless that it cannot be quite sane.) The personal advice and the counsel about public policy which the voices gave her were splendidly right. But it is unfashionable to-day to believe that saints and angels guide victorious generals, so Mr. Bernard Shaw finds it impossible to attach any objective validity to the form of St. Joan's visions.

The comedies which describe the young Socrates and his "thought shop" make it quite clear that he was known to use the word "thought" in an unusual sense, and that, even at that early period, he was occupied with the distinction between the intelligence and the senses. All things that are called "good"—a good girl, a good dinner, a good song—are good because in some way they "partake" of the general idea or form of goodness, or because in some way goodness is present in each good thing. Similarly, when a number of things is called by the same name, this chair, that chair, an arm-chair, a deck-chair, there is an idea or form, which we call chair. Particular chairs are perceived by the senses—eyes, hands, nose, and so on. But the idea, "chair," is invented or appropriated by the intelligence. This contrast between sense and intelligence plays a large part in Socratic teaching. It used to be held that it was invented by Plato, but the fact that in the earlier dialogues Socrates is represented as using the technical language of the theory of Ideas, and it is implied that



his contemporaries readily understand, means that the theory belongs to the time before Plato.

Aristotle says that "Universal Definitions" were one of Socrates' contributions to logic. This was what he was always seeking by his dialectic. What is wisdom? What is virtue? What is justice? And he wanted an answer that would cover every conceivable case. He did not ask, that is to say, for a catalogue of all the wise acts and words and persons. He wanted such a "universal definition" of wisdom that he could use it to judge whether any particular act or any particular person belonged to the class of "wise." A good example of this is the discussion of holiness in the *Euthyphro*.

"I did not ask you to tell me," says Socrates to Euthyphro, "one or two of all the many holy actions that there are; I want to know what is the essential '*eidos*' of holiness which makes all holy actions holy. You said, I think, that there is one *form* which makes all holy actions holy, and another *form* which makes all unholy actions unholy. Well, then, explain to me what is this form, that I may have it to turn to, and to use as a standard whereby to judge your actions, and those of other men, and be able to say that whatever action resembles it is holy, and whatever does not is not holy."

The first attempt at a definition is that holiness is what pleases the gods, unholy what does not please them. But the gods themselves quarrel about right and wrong; what pleases one god may offend another; the same act, then, will be both holy and unholy. Euthyphro gets to the point that the holy is what the gods approve unanimously, and the unholy is what they agree to disapprove. But the argument now takes an awkward turn, and raises a deeper question. Is a holy act holy

because the gods approve of it, or do the gods approve of it because it is holy? Clearly, it is no answer to the question what something is to be told what someone else does to it. Are things good *by nature* or because God wills them to be good?

If all the gods approve the holy act, that is because the act is holy. It does not make it holy, or tell us what its holiness is. We must start again. What is the relation of holiness to duty? Whatever action is holy is one that we ought to fulfil. Can we turn it round and say, whatever we ought to do is holiness? Are morality and religion the same thing? Is all duty duty to God? Euthyphro thinks that the holy is only part of the good. Duty to God is not the whole duty of man. You might be strong in religion but weak in honesty. There is the story of the Welshman who had a wonderful gift in prayer but was an awful liar. We know, however, that Socrates believed that all genuine goodness is a unity. What is the difference that marks off religious duties? All duty is service. Religious duty is service of the gods. Socrates' principle that all goodness is a unity would mean that you cannot serve God without serving man at the same time.

In what sense is religion the "service of the gods"? Is its aim to make them better? That is not an answer that would be generally acceptable. Is it to co-operate with the gods? The great and glorious work of God is to be the source of order and good to the universe. But Euthyphro is a poor stick of a fellow, and the dialogue ends with the futility that if a man knows how to please the gods by his prayers and sacrifices, that is

religion. In sacrifice we give something to the gods, and in prayer we ask something from them!

Foreigners were attracted to Athens by the fame of Socrates before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431. At the age of 38, then, he had a reputation throughout the whole Greek world. He was seen everywhere where men gathered to talk, and the Athenians were great talkers. As for Socrates, his love for men made him talk to everyone he met quite freely and without either reserve or payment. Indeed, if he had been able, he would gladly have paid men to listen to him. He never left the city, even for so much as a walk outside the walls; he was so fond of learning. "Now trees, you know, and fields cannot teach me anything, but men in the city can." That is a typical townsman's remark, which would have been applauded by Dr. Johnson or Charles Lamb, but it is also specially characteristic of classical times.

Socrates had practically no home life. He did not marry until past middle age, and after, as before, his marriage, he was the most accessible of men. His wife and himself had only one cloak between them, so that when one was abroad the other was compelled to remain at home. She was usually at home. But he was always about the streets, talking, talking, talking. Men were astounded and entranced by his talk. Alkibiades confesses that when he hears him his enthusiasm passes all bounds—his heart leaps and his tears cannot be repressed—and he sees many others the same; his spirit is left in a tumult. He had heard Pericles and other great orators, but he never had any similar feeling; his soul

was not stirred by them, nor was he angry at the thought of his own slavish state. Socrates had the reputation, indeed, of being the wisest of the Greeks. Chaerephon, one of his associates, asked the Oracle at Delphi if there was any man who was wiser than Socrates, and the priestess answered that there was none. Socrates tried to test this surprising answer. He went to a man, a politician, who had a reputation for wisdom. When he conversed with him he found that though a great many persons, and most of all he himself, thought that he was wise, yet he was not wise. And then he tried to prove to him that he was not wise. And he made him his enemy. After the same disappointing experience with other politicians, he went to the poets, tragic, dithyrambic, and others; and he had the same result. "I soon found that it is not by wisdom that the poets create their works, but by a certain natural power and inspiration, like soothsayers and prophets, who say many fine things, but who understand nothing of what they say."

Finally, he went to the artisans. He found that they knew many fine things. They knew what he did not know, and so far they were wiser than he. But they made the same mistake as the poets. Each of them believed himself to be extremely wise in matters of the greatest importance, because he was skilful in his own art; and this mistake of theirs threw their real wisdom into the shade. And Socrates decided that he was better as he was, without either their knowledge or their ignorance. At his trial he told the Athenians what he believed the real meaning of the Oracle:

## PROPHETS FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT

"I believe that only God is really wise : and that by this oracle he meant that men's wisdom is worth little or nothing. I do not think that he meant that Socrates was wise. He only made use of my name, and took me as an example, as though he would say to men, 'He among you is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that in very truth his wisdom is worth nothing at all.' And therefore I go about testing and examining every man whom I think wise, whether he be a citizen or a stranger, as God has commanded me ; and whenever I find that he is not wise, I point out to him on the part of God that he is not wise. And I am so busy in this pursuit that I have never had leisure to take any part worth mentioning in public matters, or to look after my private affairs. I am in very great poverty by reason of my service to God."

Socrates did good service, and won fame, as a soldier, and that is an aspect of his life and character which we must take into account. The war which broke out in 432-431 B.C., and lasted until 404, must have been a great interruption to his life-work, although there is no doubt that it played a great part in his spiritual development. He was present at the siege of Potidaea, which lasted more than two years. He had his mess there with Alkibiades, which gave the latter an opportunity of observing his extraordinary power of enduring fatigue and hunger.

"His endurance was simply marvellous when, being cut off from our supplies, we were compelled to go without food—on such occasions, which often happen in time of war, he was superior not only to me, but to everybody ; there was no one to be compared to him. Yet at a festival he was the only one who had any real powers of enjoyment ; though not wishing to drink, he could if compelled beat us all at it. Wonderful to relate, no human being had ever seen Socrates drunk. . . . His fortitude in bearing cold was surprising.

There was a severe frost, for the winter in that region is really tremendous, and everybody else either remained indoors or if they went out had on an amazing quantity of clothes, and were well shod, and also had their feet wrapped in felt and skins. In the midst of this Socrates, with his bare feet on the ice and in his ordinary clothes, marched better than the other soldiers who had shoes, and they looked daggers at him because he seemed to despise them. . . .”

Alkibiades continues :

“ I have told you one tale, and now I must tell you another, which is worth hearing, ‘ of the doings and sufferings of the enduring man,’ while he was on the expedition. One morning he was thinking of something which he could not solve ; he would not give it up, but continued thinking from early dawn until noon—there he stood fixed in thought ; and at noon attention was drawn to him, and the rumour ran through the wondering crowd that Socrates had been standing and thinking about something ever since the break of day. At last, in the evening after supper, some Ionians out of curiosity (I should explain that this was not in winter, but in summer) brought out their mats and slept in the open air that they might watch him and see whether he would stand all night. There he stood until the following morning ; and with the return of light he offered up a prayer to the sun and went his way.”

This experience of Socrates being caught up in a sort of ecstasy for about twenty-four hours at Potidaea was not an unusual happening with him, but characteristic. At the beginning of the *Symposium*, when the other guests had taken their places, the servants reported that Socrates had retired into the portico of the next house. There he was fixed, and when they called he would not stir. They were told to let him alone, because he had a way of stopping anywhere and losing himself without any reason. After this, supper was served, but still no

Socrates. But, at last, when the meal was half over—for the fit, as usual, was not of long duration—Socrates entered. Agathon, the host, remarked to him as he entered, "I am certain that you would not have come away until you found what you sought." There was not only Socrates the rationalist but also Socrates the mystic.

It was probably during some such ecstasy that the call of God came to Socrates. The fact that he describes that call in military terms at least suggests that it may have come in the very ecstasy described by Alkibiades. God commanded him to live "in philosophy," much as others have been commanded to live "in religion," and to exhort his fellows, and to tell those who were not ashamed to care so much for money and reputation and honour, that they ought to care about wisdom and truth and the perfection of the soul. To the soul their first and chiefest care should be given, and only after that should they think of their bodies or of their wealth. Professor Burnet points out that this was a novelty in Greek thought. The soul had been thought of as the life which a man loses at death. Socrates seems to have been the earliest teacher in human history who identified it with the normal consciousness of a man, with the "self" which has knowledge or ignorance, goodness or wickedness. Before his time, except for hints of a blessed immortality implied in Dionysiac and Orphic religion, there was no belief in anything after death except an empty, shadowy, half-existence to be dreaded or ignored. The idea that it is a man's most real self that is immortal seems to have

been first grasped by Socrates. This is indicated, perhaps, by the repeated jibes of Aristophanes, in *The Clouds*, at Socrates and his attendant "souls," and at his calling up souls from the other world. This must mean that as early as 423 B.C. Socrates was commonly known as one who believed in immortality. The novelty of this doctrine is also indicated by the fact that he speaks less emphatically about it in public than among his friends.

In his speech for his defence at his trial, for example, he uses our uncertainty about a future life as an argument for not fearing death.

"For anything that men can tell, death may be the greatest good that can happen to them; but they fear it as if they knew quite well that it was the greatest of evils. . . . If I were to claim to be at all wiser than others, it would be because I do not think that I have any clear knowledge about the other world, when, in fact, I have none. But I do know very well that it is evil and base to do wrong, and to disobey one who is better than myself, whether he be man or god. And I will never do what I know to be evil, nor shrink in fear from what, for all I know, may be a good."

In the *Phaedo*, however, among his intimate and trusted friends, and in the last hour of his life on earth, when the conscience of any man who is morally alive would refuse to take comfort from mere words (and the whole bearing of Socrates shows him a lover of truth to the end), he speaks more certainly.

The life of the philosopher, he says, is the practice of dying, and to him of all men is death least terrible. By that he means that the search after truth can only be practised if the soul releases herself so far as possible from imprisonment and slavery to the body, and uses the senses only when she



must. Absolute, eternal, truth is appropriated by the soul, it is only transient appearance that the body can reach. The body leads the soul astray. She reasons best when none of the senses, or pain or pleasure, harasses her ; ' when she has dismissed the body, and released herself as far as she can from all intercourse and contact with it, and so, coming to be as much alone with herself as possible, strives after real truth.' Philosophy, indeed, teaches the soul to rally and gather herself together, and to trust only to herself and to the real existence which she of her own self apprehends. . . . At death such a soul is pure, and so draws after her when she dies no taint of the body, but goes away to the invisible which is like herself, and to the divine and immortal and the wise, where she is released from error and folly and fear and fierce passions, and all the other evils which fall to the lot of man, and is happy, and for the rest of time lives in very truth with the gods, as they say the initiated do.

Socrates' own belief about immortality is quite confident. It will be far better for the good than for the wicked. In the *Phaedo* he reiterates this again and again : with the souls of the good it is good, and with the souls of the evil it is evil.

" Noble is the prize and great the hope. . . . The man of sense will think it worth his while to stake everything on this belief. . . . Let a man be of good cheer about his soul, if he has renounced the pleasures and adornments of the body, because they were nothing to him and did him harm rather than good, and has earnestly pursued the pleasures of knowledge, and has adorned his soul in ' her own proper jewels,' temperance, and justice, and courage, and freedom, and truth, and so awaits his journey to the other world, when his hour comes. . . . Me now fate calls at once."

Socrates is surprised to find that while carpenters and shoemakers and other craftsmen know what their art is, and can teach it to others, those who teach virtue

are not able to say what goodness is. He knew a great deal about handicrafts, and was very much interested in them. He was, indeed, as far as could be—and almost unique in this—from the common Greek contempt for manual labour. Xenophon says that when he talked to craftsmen he was always able to say something that proved of service to them. Really, however, he used the arts—and the common ones too—as illustrations of his philosophy. It was well known that he did this. When he was haled before the Thirty for speaking critically of their illegal acts, and ordered to keep silence, one of the things that Critias said, in explanation of the order, was: "It will be necessary for you to abstain from speaking of those shoemakers and carpenters and smiths: indeed I think they must now be worn out, from being so often in your mouth." "I must, therefore," said Socrates, "abstain from the lessons I draw from these people, namely, lessons of justice, piety, and other such subjects." "Yes, by Jupiter," retorted Charicles.

It reminds one very much of the Synoptic Jesus, who expressed what He had to say about God and Man and duty and destiny in stories of farmers and shepherds and housewives and fishermen and builders. Socrates sees that the craftsmen know their art, and can teach it. The physicians know theirs, and can train others in the art of health. Why can nobody teach the art of life? In that, as in the other arts, success comes from learning and knowledge and practice. You know the difference between the professional and the amateur. Why are you content to be an amateur in living, when you are

at pains to get proper instruction in getting a living? You behave as though you know all about justice and wisdom and courage and yet you cannot tell me what any one of them is. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates points out that the Athenians, in the assembly, take advice on building from builders, on ship-building from shipwrights, and so on. And if some other person offers advice on such matters, "even though he be good-looking, and rich and noble," they will not give him a hearing. But if it is a matter of statesmanship, that is, of what is wise or foolish, right or wrong, "then everybody is free to have a say—carpenter, tinker, cobbler, sailor, passenger; rich and poor, high and low—any one who likes gets up," and no one reproaches him with not knowing anything of the matter. It is all very similar to the well-known passage in Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*, in which Undershaft, the millionaire, discusses his prospects with his son. He will not go into trade, as he has no capacity for commerce. He has nothing of the artist about him, in faculty or character. He made no pretension to being a philosopher. He had not studied law, and had not the necessary push to be a successful barrister. But he knew the difference between right and wrong. As his father put it: "Only a simple knowledge of the secret that has puzzled all the philosophers, baffled all the lawyers, muddled all the men of business, and ruined most of the artists." It is everybody's birthright. A Salvation lassie who would not dream of teaching grammar or mathematics or geography or even drawing-room dancing, does not doubt that she can teach morals and religion. "You

can't tell me the bursting strain of a ten-inch gun, which is a very simple matter ; but you all think you can tell me the bursting strain of a man under temptation. You daren't handle high explosives ; but you are all ready to handle honesty and truth and justice and the whole duty of man."

Socrates takes up the paradoxical position—in arguing with Protagoras, for example—that virtue—the good life, for a man or a statesman—cannot be taught, but that it consists in knowledge. If we can elucidate the two sides of this paradox we shall be well on the way to understanding the central idea of Socrates' moral teaching. The secret of life cannot be taught, for the same reason that it cannot be written down in a book. It can be discovered by the fellowship of two minds in the interplay which is described in Plato's dialogues, and implied in the notion of dialectic. The idea that virtue can be taught, in the ordinary sense of the word, means that morality is entirely relative. A man may teach me what is thought to be right in England or America, or among Catholics or Buddhists. But if I want to know, not what is thought to be right, but what is right, then that is something I must see for myself. It cannot be proved for a man that truth is better than a lie, that love is better than hate. He sees these things or he does not. He sees it, and if he does, what others believe or think or do becomes irrelevant. It is the same thing, essentially, as the process by which a man sees the steps in a proof by Euclid. When he sees them he knows, and until he sees them for himself he may believe or think, but he does not know. So

for Socrates, when I recognize for myself that an act is right I have become virtuous. I can no more learn it than I can learn that a rose is red. Once the terms are understood, morality is not, strictly, matter for argument or instruction at all. The individual must see for himself what is right for him to do.

From this there comes the characteristic Socratic doctrine that vice or sin is nothing else than ignorance, and that virtue is knowledge. I had almost said, says Socrates, that no wise man ever entertained the opinion that any mortal errs willingly, or commits base and wicked actions willingly. On the contrary, wise men well know that all who do base and evil deeds, do them involuntarily. The knowledge of what the virtues are is all that is necessary. If a man has that knowledge he must necessarily be good, if he has not, he cannot be good. Knowledge is a noble thing, well fitted to govern mankind; and if a man does but know what is good and evil, he can never be so swayed by any other thing, as to do ought else than what his knowledge tells him. In fine, wisdom is well able to defend mankind. No man who either knows or believes that other things are better than that which he is doing, if they are such things as he can do, proceeds to do the less good, when he might do the better. Subjection to self is nothing but ignorance, and mastery over self is nothing but wisdom.

This identification of virtue and knowledge seems less paradoxical when we understand it. In any particular case, Socrates was prepared to demonstrate, at least to his own satisfaction, that the virtuous is also pleasant,

and the beautiful is also profitable. He believed, quite literally, that the life devoted to virtue is richer in enjoyment than any career which seeks luxury or success. An outstanding example of this is the calmness with which he faced death rather than break the law. He said that it was probably to his interest to die. Obviously, if a man thinks that he can prove that the good life excels both in profit and in pleasure he will judge that those who do wrong do it through ignorance.

The Greeks conceived of morality rather in terms of the good than in terms of right. Choice, not authority, was the fundamental element in the conception. "Every man desires what is good for himself" does not seem so unlikely as "Every man desires what is right." Neither is the converse, "I call good what I myself desire," so revolutionary in sound as "right and wrong just express the difference between what I want and what I do not want." There is a good deal to be said for Socrates' view that only good conduct is truly voluntary. A man's real wish is always for his own greatest good. The man whom we call "bad" is constrained by ignorance to what is contrary to his real wish. Only knowledge can set him free to seek what he really wants.

The modern distinction between intellect or knowledge and common sense or wisdom had not been invented by the Greeks. When the modern psychologist draws up a scheme of "intelligence tests," as they are called, he is really measuring the more mechanical aspect of the mind, and not that which gives insight into character or capacity to deal with actual human problems or relations. And it is not obvious that these two

mental functions are closely connected, still less that they are identical.

The meaning of the identification of virtue and knowledge is summed up in the phrase which Socrates used at his trial: the uncriticized life is not fit for a human being to live. Or it is shown in the story in the Codex Bezae: Once Jesus saw a man digging on the Sabbath, and said to him, "If thou knowest what thou doest, blessed art thou, but if thou knowest not, thou art a breaker of the law, and accursed." The good life is not the natural expression of impulse, the thoughtless life, but the self-conscious life. The virtuous man knows what he is doing; the essence of immorality is to know not what you do. To think before you act, to think as you act, to act as the result of thought, to know yourself and that your act is a free, deliberate expression of that self, to live as Jesus died, not receiving the drugged wine, that is what it means to be moral. Ultimately, to be moral and to be rational is the same thing. "I know where I'm going" is the word of one who is critical of himself, who has a conscience, who is autonomous, and whose outward acts are the expression of his own nature. The Socratic identification of virtue and knowledge makes human values at once more individual and, therefore, more universal than the merely conventional standards of Protagoras, with his "man is the measure of all things." Socrates believed that morals are no more "relative" than mathematics, they are matter of *knowledge*. And for the same reason, the only criticism of my actions which is relevant is my own criticism, for intelligence is the essence of virtue. All

growth in character is a growth in self-criticism. That is why Socrates said, not only that knowledge of the good is virtue, but also—following one of the ancient sages—that man must know himself. A complete, adult man is morally autonomous. He does that which is right in his own eyes. He does what he likes because he sees with perfect clarity what is really good. He finds his happiness in possessing his own soul.

A man who is born into a good tradition—whether of family, or class, or school, or Church, or commonwealth—will usually be kept on the right road, so far as he accepts that tradition and is loyal to it. But in days like ours, when traditions are challenged, his lot is not easy. And at best, he lives by authority and not by knowledge. His goodness is not secured by a “reasoned account of the cause.” The man who really knows, knows that everything worth doing is only worth doing “for the sake of the good,” which is the only thing it is really possible to desire. Only the philosopher knows the good; his soul is in complete union with it. So that one result of Socrates’ identification of virtue and knowledge is to repeat, from a different point of view, Pythagoras’s exaltation of the philosopher’s life as the best of all. Aristotle also held this view. Only the philosopher lives a life that can, without any reservation, be called “good.”

The obvious criticism of Socrates’ ethical teaching—that it is silly to be wicked, and only the intelligent are good—goes back as far as Aristotle. He says, in the seventh book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that Socrates “argued on the theory that want of self-control did not



exist." Some have seen in this a proof that he himself found self-control easy. Sidgwick says, for example, that Socrates in his own life manifested firmness of purpose as well as fulness of insight. Whatever he believed to be fair and good he must necessarily do : whenever another acted apparently against knowledge the easiest explanation seemed to be that true knowledge was not really there. But that is only speculation, unchecked by evidence—that is, guess-work. And it is just as easy to speculate on the other side. Nietzsche says, for example, that while on his way through Athens a certain foreigner, who was no fool at judging by looks, told Socrates to his face that he was a monster, that his body harboured all the worst vices and passions. And Socrates replied simply : " You know me, sir ! " Which is just exactly the opposite to Sidgwick's judgment. But the great Master of Irony let fall then one or two words more which, Nietzsche says, provide the key to his nature. " You are a crater full of evil desires," said the stranger. " That is true," said Socrates, " but I overcame them all."

It is common, of course, to say that Socrates, in his theory, ignored the will ; but as the will is very difficult to define, that statement does not carry us very far. It is true that when Socrates identified virtue with knowledge he meant knowledge of what is good in itself, not as a means to an end, but as an end. Obviously, this knowledge involves my ideals—what I believe to be worth living for. The whole man, his character, his past choices, his loyalties, his courage, are all included in what Socrates means by knowledge. But even in the

work of intelligence in the narrower sense, in the discovery of scientific truth, the whole man is involved. Croce holds, for example, that it is impossible to err in good faith. Error is always practical, and is due ultimately to the incursion of the will itself into the sphere of theory. The root of error is impatience, when it is not something worse. It is the substitution of willing for thinking, so that in the end all error is deliberate lying, the repetition of a form of words which we do not genuinely think. This seems to be the converse of Socrates' view. The ancient rooted morality in intelligence, and the modern grounds intelligence in morality.

There is an unexpected inner consistency in the teaching of Socrates, unexpected, that is to say, if we remember how informal it was in its expression. The reason why men do not live well is that they do not know how to live, they do not know how to secure the end of all life, the good. What is the final good, the "chief end of man," to use a phrase that belongs to a thousand years after Socrates? It is impossible to describe the good, the idea of it is "infinitely ambiguous." Until we know the ultimate reality about ourselves we shall not know what will give us final satisfaction, and until we know all Being in its eternal completeness, we cannot know that "beyond Being" which sustains it. Not only so, but because the Intelligence knows Being in so far as both alike "partake" of the "Idea of Ideas," the Good, no description can ever be given of it in words or concepts, even by the mind to itself. It will be known, at last and if at all, by vision, intuition, direct acquaintance. "Either a man possesses it or is pos-

essed by it, or he does not," says Professor A. E. Taylor, "and there is no more to be said."

So we can give little more than very general indications of the conditions the good will satisfy. Every creature strives for what brings it pleasure or happiness. In the *Symposium*—and elsewhere—it is assumed that men strive for the good. But that does not take us very far. It certainly does not take us to the identification of the good with the pleasant. It is obvious that the good man gets pleasure from what is good, while the bad man gets pleasure from getting rich quick, or something of that sort. The life of sin is marked by violent and exciting pleasures. Socrates has much of value to say on the subject, however. The good man is completely happy, but it is a crime to say that the bad man is happy. Indeed, all the things commonly accounted good,—health, power, riches, long-life,—make the bad man miserable; for him they, and everything else, are not good but bad. Whatever is truly "useful" for a man—to his interest—is good, and whatever is harmful is base. The two elements in the good are pleasure and intelligence. But the latter is, of course, the more fundamental. Man ought to find pleasure in what is reasonable, he ought not to use his intelligence as an instrument to get pleasure.

The Socratic conviction that the good cannot be defined or described explains what at first sight seems a very curious fact. The people who followed Socrates and looked to him as their master—Plato, Aristotle, and the four Socratic Schools—said many contradictory things about the good and the pleasant, and it is a

problem for the history of philosophy to discover what Socrates said and meant if intelligent men could put such entirely different interpretations on his teaching. If these disciples were all agreed, their agreement might represent some misunderstanding or development, or even corruption, of his teaching. The fact that they disagree is hopeful, if perplexing, but it is a sufficient warning that his teaching may mean more than, and perhaps something different from, what on the surface it seems to mean.

Ritter, the greatest living European authority on the subject, says that Socrates and Plato were Hedonists, or, at least, Eudæmonists. A. E. Taylor, the greatest British authority on the subject, denies this. In order to decide we must remember the career of the man whose teaching is being interpreted. He was very unselfish. He gave up his whole life to teach men "to care for their souls," so that he was in poverty because of his neglect of his private affairs. He had a great reputation for personal bravery in battle. He risked his life for others, and when others ran away he did not run. At the risk of his own life he defied the illegal acts of government and of the people. He died rather than compromise, to the least degree, with the prejudices and passions of the mob: he would not break the law to save his life. When you say that Socrates said that goodness is pleasant, you have to make room in your idea of pleasure for the life that he lived and the death that he did not hesitate to die.

Another favourite doctrine of Socrates was that of the unity of virtue. All virtues are the same. Courage,

wisdom, love, justice—these are not parts of virtue, as the features are parts of the face. Each of them, rightly understood, unreservedly practised, is the whole of virtue. You cannot be wise unless you are also brave, neither is there such a thing as foolish courage. You cannot be just unless you are also wise—that goes without saying—and when you come down to the facts of life you will find that you cannot really be just to any man, and give him what is his due, unless you love him. In the same way, love is the truest wisdom, and only courage is able to be just; as we ring the changes on all these identifications we see how rich and suggestive is the ethical philosophy that they reveal. I believe that this view is fundamentally sound and that it was arrived at, quite independently, by primitive Christianity. If we take the Beatitudes—the blessings on the poor, the mourner, the meek, the man with a passionate longing for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemaker, the persecuted—as the symbolic summary of Christ's ethical teaching, we must remember that they all apply to one man, to one unified character, which is meek and merciful and peacemaking—and the rest of it; most emphatically they do not describe eight different, disconnected ideals. The man is not a Christian man, from an ethical point of view, who reveals some of these qualities.

This, however, is not all that is to be said of the primitive Christian ideal, which comes even closer to the Socratic statement of the unity of virtue. St. Paul states the Socratic principle quite definitely. "If there be any commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this say-

ing, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "Love is the fulfilling of the law." And St. Augustine, in the fourth century, stated the same principle without reservation: "Love, and do what you like." Socrates' own insistence on the unity of all virtue was more theoretical and explicit. Xenophon says that he did not distinguish prudence from temperance, and that he said that justice was a part of prudence, for that everything just and everything done agreeably to virtue was honourable and good. This, however, does not make the point clear, for to say that justice is "a part of" prudence is to make exactly the kind of statement that Socrates wanted explained. He asks Protagoras whether virtue is one whole, of which justice and temperance and holiness are parts, or whether all these are only the names of one and the same thing, and he tries to persuade him that there is no difference between justice and holiness, and that wisdom and temperance are the same.

This recognition that all forms of the good are the same leads naturally to the belief that there is a final, supreme Idea—the Idea of the Good—in which all good actions, all virtues, share, which is present in them and makes them good. In the *Symposium*, for example, Socrates spoke of the ideal Beauty, indistinguishable from the idea of the Good discussed in the *Republic*. In a discussion in praise of Love, he is repeating what Diotima, a foreign prophetess, had told him on this matter in his youth. She had said that to cultivate the acquaintance of one beautiful person will create fair thoughts in a man. He will learn to compare beautiful things, and to love them all, and will then come to see

that beauty of the mind is more to be admired than beauty of outward form. So he will learn to contemplate the beauty of institutions and laws. Then he will go on to the sciences, that he may see their beauty, and drawing towards and contemplating the vast sea of beauty, he will create many fair and noble thoughts in boundless love of wisdom; until at last the vision is revealed to him of a single science of beauty everywhere.

Having learned to see the beautiful in due order and succession, he sees at last a nature of wondrous beauty: everlasting, not growing and decaying, or waxing and waning: not fair in one aspect and foul in another, or beautiful in one time and relation and place but not otherwise: but beauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without any change in itself is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauty of all other things. They are to be enjoyed only as leading the mind on and up to contemplate the true beauty.

“But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colours and vanities of human life—thither looking and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine? Remember how in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of a reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life?”

That is one of the great passages of philosophical literature. It helps to make plain what Socrates and Plato meant by the doctrine of Ideas, and it had great

influence, and still has, in certain types of Christian thought. A famous passage in St. Augustine's *Confessions* is certainly reminiscent of it, which describes how leaning in a certain window at Ostia, he and his mother, St. Monica, were discussing of what sort the eternal life of the saints was to be.

“ We were saying then : If to any the tumult of the flesh were hushed, hushed the images of earth, and waters, and air, hushed also the poles of heaven, yea, the very soul be hushed to herself, and by not thinking on self surmount self, hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations, every tongue and every sign, and whatsoever exists only in transition, since if any could hear, all these say, We made not ourselves, but He made us that abideth for ever. If, then, having uttered this, they too should be hushed, having roused only our ears to Him who made them, and He alone speak, not by them, but by Himself, that we may hear His Word, not through any tone of flesh, nor Angel's voice, nor sound of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, but might hear whom in these things we love, might hear His Very Self without these (as we two now strained ourselves, and in swift thought touched on that Eternal Wisdom, which abideth over all)—could this be continued on, and other visions of kind far unlike be withdrawn, and this one ravish, and absorb, and wrap up its beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might be for ever like that one moment of understanding which now we sighed after ; were not this, Enter into Thy Master's joy ? ”

The Peloponnesian war began in 431 and dragged on almost to the death of Socrates. It was an internecine struggle among the Greek cities, and really meant the revolt of Greece against the empire of Athens. While it resulted in the final destruction of the Athenian rule, it left all the cities so much weakened that there was no power to resist, in the next century,



the rise of the Macedonian Empire under Philip and his son Alexander, the first European Empire. The Athenians suffered a severe defeat at Delium in 424, a battle remarkable for the outstanding bravery of Socrates, and he acquitted himself with similar distinction at Amphipolis in 422. From 431 to 422 Socrates fought as one of the Athenian *hoplites*. This means that he was far from being poor, because he could provide his own equipment as a fully armed soldier. At some time soon after this, however, he became poor; he says that it was through his neglect of his own affairs in the service of God and his fellow-men. He could not afford a new cloak, and he shared his old one with Xanthippe, his wife. The comic writers describe him as "a stout-hearted fellow that, for all his hunger, never stooped to be a parasite," "a garrulous person, who has *thoughts* about everything, except where to get a meal."

He married Xanthippe after he was reduced to poverty, in all probability. By her he had three children, who were all young at his death, one of them being a baby. He departed, at his trial, from the usual custom, for he did not allow his wife and their children to come to weep before the judges, to move them to pity. On the day of his execution he took a brief farewell of them, but did not allow them to stay until the end.

Socrates took no part in public life until he was in his sixty-fourth year. Then the very existence of Athens was at stake—she had put her all into the expedition against Syracuse, and she had lost. He had kept out of politics because his voice had warned him against them; he knew that no man can preserve his life for

long, if he firmly opposes the wishes of the people, and tries to prevent injustice and illegal acts in the State. He saw that Pericles himself had started the democracy on the way to anarchy and tyranny. In 406, however, he allowed himself to be nominated for the senate and, the lot falling on him, he became a member of it. By a most extraordinary chance, it was his turn to preside on an occasion when he could veto an illegal course which was stoutly demanded by the people. In that year the Athenian fleet defeated the Spartans at Arginusae. After the battle, the commanders omitted to recover the bodies of their dead, or to save the wounded from the sinking ships. When the Athenians at home heard of this, they were furious. The senate decided that the Athenian people, having heard the accusation and defence, should proceed at once to vote for the condemnation or acquittal of the eight commanders *en bloc*. This was obviously unjust; it was also explicitly illegal—for one of the laws of Athens decreed that a separate verdict should be found in the case of each person accused.

At the time Socrates was a member of the committee responsible for examining each motion to be presented to the assembly, to see whether it was according to law. If not, it was to be quashed. Some members protested—but the illegal course was very popular, and they were silenced by threats. Socrates took his turn as president on the day the motion was to come up for the vote, and he vetoed it. He was threatened with suspension and arrest, and the mob clamoured against him, and cried out to him to yield. But he faced the danger out

in the cause of law and justice, rather than join with them in their unjust proposal through fear of imprisonment and death. His authority only lasted for one day ; the motion was postponed, and the commanders were condemned and executed.

Later, in 404, the democracy was, for a time, overthrown and an oligarchy was set up—the government of the Thirty, as it was called. This lasted for rather less than a year, but it was a Reign of Terror. Political opponents and private enemies were murdered ruthlessly. All kinds of people were used as assassins, in order to implicate as many as possible. One day they sent for Socrates and four others, and ordered them to bring a certain Leon from Salamis. Socrates showed them that he did not care a straw for death, but that he did care very much indeed about not doing anything against the laws of God or man. When they left the Council-chamber, the other four went to Salamis and brought Leon, and Socrates went away home. And if the rule of the Thirty had not been destroyed soon afterwards he might have been put to death for what he did then.

We only understand the character and philosophy and career of Socrates if we realize that he did not admit that it was right to break the law, on any pretext whatever. As we shall see, this led to his death. He was charged with being an evil-doer who corrupted the youth and who did not believe in the gods that the city believed in, but in other new gods. The charge of atheism was a stock charge against the Ionian philosophers—against Anaxagoras, for example. The charge of “cor-

rupting the youth" was a stock charge against the sophists. These were not peculiar, then, to the case of Socrates, and it has been sometimes assumed that there was nothing more in his case.

But the charge against Socrates was not a charge of atheism, but of a religion which was not allowed, "other new gods." Socrates was the first notable non-conformist in history. It is clear from the list of those who were present at the death of Socrates—"a remarkable company of foreigners"—as well as from the account of his early life in *The Clouds*, that he was the head in Athens, and perhaps throughout much of Greece, of a sect, one might almost say a secret society, of Pythagoreans. To this circle in Athens there would cling the suspicion that always attaches to an unfamiliar religion, especially when it is that of a minority. But that is not all. Many of the cities where Pythagoreanism was strongest were precisely those which had been the keenest enemies of Athens in the Peloponnesian war. Some of those present at his death had come straight from those very cities. Not only so, but the oracle at Delphi had pronounced Socrates the wisest of the Greeks, and that in itself was suspicious; for many good Athenians held that throughout the war the Delphinian Apollo had shown a marked partiality for Sparta, the chief enemy of Athens. It would be no wonder, then, if there was a common rumour in Athens that Socrates was the centre and leader of an anti-patriotic clique.

To be anti-democratic in Athens was, of course, to be anti-patriotic. It is true that Socrates made a parade

of taking no part in politics, but that may have been just a result of his lack of sympathy with the democracy. It was certainly significant that when the *coup d'état* came in 404, Socrates did not leave Attica, as did the prominent democrats. Many of those who professed to owe much to him, and associated openly with him, were rich young nobles who were known to dislike the democracy. Alkibiades was the most notorious of these, but there were others. This private religion of theirs—Pythagoreanism—was perhaps a way of influencing Heaven against the Athenian democracy. The group looked like a secret society to overthrow the constitution. Socrates must go.

This may not have been mentioned at the trial; so far as we know, it was not. We have Plato's account of the speeches that Socrates made in his own defence, but no report of the speeches of the accusers. But much of this, we may presume, was in the minds of the 501 free Athenian citizens who formed the Court.

Socrates tries, in his first speech, to remove from the minds of the Court the sort of prejudice that might be presumed to have been there for over twenty years, due to the attack of Aristophanes and other comic poets. They had accused him of being a natural philosopher like Anaxagoras, and a wicked sophist. He was neither. People disliked him because, in obedience to the oracle, he had gone about seeking to find a wise man. Men do not like to be proved to know nothing when they think they know something. That was the cause of his unpopularity. He will go on, however, in spite of the risk of death. He did not fear death in obedience to

the orders of generals—fighting for Athens. Shall he fear it in obedience to God's orders? He will not accept an acquittal on condition that he keeps silence. He is a benefactor to the city—rousing them to care for their souls. If he had taken part in politics, he would have been put to death years ago, for he would have opposed the injustice there is in every party, in every city. If young men had been corrupted by him, why do they not come forward to give evidence against him; or why do their relatives not do so? They know he is speaking the truth. He will not appeal to their mercy. It is their duty to decide according to law. It would be to stand self-condemned if he—accused of not believing in the gods of the city—tried to persuade them to break their oaths to the gods.

He was condemned by 281 votes to 220. Then came the question of the punishment. The prosecution (Meletus a poet, Lycon a rhetorician, and Anytus a politician) pressed for the full penalty—death. It was the custom for the accused to suggest an alternative smaller penalty, and to appeal to the pity of the Court by bringing in his weeping wife and children. But Socrates insisted on being consistent. He was a public benefactor. He deserved to be fed and housed by the State, free, in return for his services. Anyhow, he was too poor to pay a fine. How would a five-pound note do? His friends, indeed, would pay £120 for him, but they must have time to raise it. The jury condemned him to death by a larger majority than before.

His farewell speech to his judges is entirely fearless. They have not gained very much time by their verdict,

for he is an old man, and near to death, and if they had waited a little while their wishes would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. As it is, they will have an evil name from all who wish to revile the city, and they will cast in their teeth that they put Socrates, a wise man, to death. When he was defending himself he thought that he ought not to do anything unmanly because of the danger that he ran. There are some things which neither he nor any other man may do in order to escape death.

“ But, my friends, I think that it is a much harder thing to escape from wickedness than from death ; for wickedness is swifter than death. . . . And now I shall go hence, sentenced by you to death ; and my accusers will go hence, sentenced by truth to receive the penalty of wickedness and evil. And I abide by this award as well as they. . . . And you too, judges, must face death with a good courage, and believe this as a truth, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life, or after death. His fortunes are not neglected by the gods ; and what has come to me has not come by chance. I am persuaded that it was better for me to die now, and to be released from trouble. . . . Yet I have one request to make of my accusers. When my sons grow up, visit them with punishment, my friends, and vex them in the same way that I have vexed you, if they seem to you to care for riches, or for any other thing, before virtue : and if they think that they are something, when they are nothing at all, reproach them, as I have reproached you, for not caring for what they should, and for thinking that they are great men when in fact they are worthless. And if you will do this, I myself and my sons will have received our deserts at your hands. But now the time has come, and we must go hence, I to die, and you to live. Whether life or death is better is known to God, and to God only.”

It is probable that the Athenians expected Socrates

to break from prison before the time came to drink the hemlock. It was commonly done. All they wanted was to get rid of him—to escape from his endless criticism. His friends, indeed, made all arrangements, and chartered a ship to take him away. But he refused to go. With what consistency could he break the law, who had lived to teach men to do what was right? His condemnation, indeed, was unjust, but to break from prison would be to reply to one evil action by another. Life would not be worth living if it were not a search for virtue, and such a search would be meaningless if life had been bought by breaking the law.

So there arrives his last day on earth, described in the *Phaedo*, a very great dialogue indeed. The scene is the prison, where Socrates and his friends discuss poetic inspiration, and the arguments for a future life. Those arguments seem singularly unconvincing, almost meaningless, for the modern world. But the description of the spirit in which Socrates faced the end is a possession for ever for the human race. The last pages of the *Phaedo* are one of the supreme things in European literature. Socrates' last commands to his friends were that they should take care of their own selves, and they will serve him and his and themselves in all that they do, even though they make no promises then. How shall they bury him? As they please, but they must catch him first, and see that he does not escape them. For he is not the body that they will presently see a corpse. When they see his body being burnt or buried, they will not be grieved because they think that he is suffering dreadful things: and at his funeral they will not



say that it is Socrates whom they are laying out, or bearing to the grave, or burying. At the beginning of their conversation that day he had told them that he would be wrong not to grieve at death, if he did not think that he was going to live both with other gods who are good and wise, and with men who have died, and who are better than the men of this world. But he hoped that he was going to live among good men, though he was not quite sure of that. But he was as sure as he could be in such matters that he was going to live with gods who are very good masters.

After he had bathed, and had taken a brief farewell of his wife and children and the women of his family, he was ready to die. Crito pointed out that it was not yet sunset ; he had known other men take the poison quite late, after they had had a hearty meal and enjoyed the company of their friends as long as possible. Socrates agreed that that was natural, for these others thought they would be gainers by so doing. But he thought that he would gain nothing by drinking the poison a little later, except his own contempt for so greedily saving up a life which was already spent. So the slave brought the hemlock, and Socrates asked what he was to do. He had only to drink it, and then walk about until his legs felt heavy, and then lie down. The poison would act of itself. " With that he handed the cup to Socrates, who took it quite cheerfully, without trembling, and without any change of colour or of features, and looked up at the man with that fixed gaze of his, and asked, ' What say you to making a libation from this draught ? May I, or not ? ' ' We only prepare so

## S O C R A T E S

much as we think sufficient, Socrates,' he answered. 'I understand,' said Socrates. 'But I suppose that I may and must pray to the gods that my journey hence may be prosperous: that is my prayer; be it so.' With those words he put the cup to his lips and drank the poison quite calmly and cheerfully." At that point his friends quite lost control of themselves, and broke down, and wept aloud—it was not for him, but at their own misfortune at losing such a friend. "What are you doing, my friends?" he exclaimed. "I sent away the women chiefly in order that they might not offend in this way; for I have heard that a man should die in silence." When they heard that they were ashamed, and they ceased from weeping. But he walked about, until he said that his legs were growing heavy, and then he lay down on his back as he had been told. First his feet and legs grew cold and stiff, and so higher and higher, and he said that when it reached his heart he would be gone. He was already growing cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, which had been covered, and spoke for the last time. "Crito," he said, "I owe a cock to Asklepios; do not forget to pay it." (Asklepios was the god of health, to whom an offering was due on recovery from sickness. Did Socrates mean, "After life's fitful fever, I am set free into a better life"?) Crito replied that the cock should be paid, and asked whether there was anything else that he wished should be done. He made no answer to that question; but after a short time there was a movement, and the man uncovered him, and his eyes were fixed. Then Crito closed his mouth and his eyes.

There are three comments in the *Phaedo* which say all that is necessary.

"I myself was strangely moved on that day. I did not feel that I was being present at the death of a dear friend; I did not pity him, for he seemed to me happy, both in his bearing and in his words, so fearlessly and nobly did he die. I could not help feeling that the gods would watch over him still on his journey to the other world, and that when he arrived there it would be well with him, if it was ever well with any man. Therefore I had scarcely any feeling of pity, as you would expect at such a time."

That comes very near to the beginning of the dialogue. Then, when Socrates has gone out to bathe himself, before drinking the poison—so that he shall not give the women the trouble of washing his body—his friends, as they waited, talked of the greatness of the calamity which had fallen upon them. It seemed as if they were going to lose a father, and to be orphans for the rest of their life. And the last words of the dialogue strike the same note: "Such was the end of our friend . . . a man, I think, who was the wisest and justest, and the best man I have ever known."

## PASCAL

**B**LAISE PASCAL was born in Auvergne in 1623. The seventeenth century in Europe has been called, with much truth, the century of genius. And if by genius we mean a difference from the intellect and spiritual quality of the ordinary man so great in degree that it seems a difference in kind, then no man should be called a genius rather than Pascal. Within thirty years of his death the poet Boileau said that Pascal was the one modern who was greater than all ancients and moderns alike. And in our own day an English priest has said that Pascal wrote things about God and the Soul, Sin and Grace, as deep as have been written since the days of Christ's apostles.

He escapes the definition of our ordinary words. He lived just a century after the Reformation began, but in France, where the Reformation cut less deep into men's souls than in most other countries. Rome has had few sons more certain that there could be no salvation out of communion with the Pope, but few would claim that he is in the main line of Roman apologetic; indeed, his orthodoxy is even yet matter of controversy, and he was bold to say: "If my letters are condemned in Rome, that which I condemn is condemned in heaven."

He was entirely French in character and mind. In

the *Provincial Letters*, perhaps the greatest polemic of all time, he is without doubt the supreme master of French prose. A great French critic has said that he is the most representative embodiment of the French genius. What Plato is to Greece, Dante to Italy, Cervantes or St. Teresa to Spain, Goethe to Germany, Shakespeare to England, that Pascal is to France. And yet the French trust in Logic, the French confidence that what is lucid and definite is therefore the truth, whole and undefiled, has been by no one as by Pascal so confidently denied and, in practice, proved to be inadequate. "The heart has its reasons that reason does not know" might almost be the epigraph of the *Pensées*.

He was a scientist of incomparable power, not only in mathematical grasp but also in experimental insight, but he records his intention of writing against those who make too deep a study of the sciences. The interest of his life was not nature but God. He writes bluntly of "the vanity of the sciences," a truth which they do not see who in our day believe the cure for the social and spiritual chaos into which science has at least helped to bring us is—still more science. "Physical science will not console me," he says, "for the ignorance of morality in the time of affliction. But the science of ethics will always console me for the ignorance of the physical sciences." And elsewhere he says: "I approve of not examining the opinion of Copernicus; but this . . . ! It concerns all our life to know whether the soul be mortal or immortal." He is in open and complete opposition to the spirit of Bacon and Descartes, the spirit which has excluded from modern thought all effec-

tive concern with the meaning of life and has concentrated attention on the means. "I cannot forgive Descartes," he writes. "In all his philosophy he would have liked to do without God. But he had to make Him give a fillip to set the world in motion; beyond this he would have no more to do with God."

He was a "man of the world." He liked good talk, and mixed with fashionable people. He kept a carriage and horses and a good establishment. And he opposed his sister's desire to enter Port Royal because with her money and his own together they could not only share in that kind of life but also provide the means for the experiments in physics in which he was interested. A man of the world and a man of science! And he gave up not only his stable, his servants, his worldly life, but also his books and his pursuit of science, that he might have more money to give to the poor. He was at home among the learned, in the world, and with the saints of God.

There are, he said, three orders of reality. The carnal order is that of the rich and kings and the worldly great. They have the body as their object. Pascal was at home in that order, and for a brief period of his short life he seemed to value the things of this world. But he never, so far as we know, gave way to wantonness and debauchery. He was an ascetic among men of the world, and there came a time when he used his great powers to persuade them of the vanity of worldly pursuits.

Infinitely far from the carnal order, as completely different as is the mind from the body, is the order of

inquirers and scientists. They have the mind as their object. All the glory of greatness has no charm for people who are in search of understanding. They have their own glory and greatness and power, and have no need of worldly greatness, with which they have no affinity. Archimedes, apart from his princely rank, would have the same veneration. He fought no battles . . . but he has given his discoveries to all men. Oh ! what splendour he has among minds !

Then there is the order of wisdom or charity, of the will. It has righteousness as its object. God alone gives wisdom, charity and righteousness : *Qui gloriatur, in Domine gloriatur*. The infinite distance between body and mind is a symbol of the infinitely more infinite distance between mind and charity ; for charity is supernatural. The saints have their power, their glory, their attractiveness, and need no worldly or intellectual greatness, for these neither add anything to them, nor take anything from them. They are seen of God and the angels, and not of the body, nor of the curious mind. God is enough for them.

There are some who can only admire worldly greatness, as though there were no intellectual greatness ; and others who only admire intellectual greatness, as though there were not infinitely higher things in wisdom. The whole physical universe is not equal to the lowest mind ; for mind knows all these and itself ; and bodies know nothing. And all bodies, and all minds, and all their products, are not equal to the least impulse of charity. That belongs to an infinitely higher order.

So he makes clear that it is in this supernatural order

of charity, and there alone, that Jesus Christ is great. Without riches, and without any external exhibition of knowledge? He is great in His own order of holiness. He invented nothing; He did not reign. But He was humble, patient, holy, holy, holy to God, terrible to demons, without any sin. Oh! in what great pomp, and in what wonderful splendour, did He come—to the eyes of the heart, which perceive wisdom.

It would have been useless for our Lord Jesus Christ to come like a king, in order to be splendid in His kingdom of holiness. But He came appropriately with the glory of His own order.

It is very ridiculous to be shocked at the lowliness of Jesus Christ, as if this lowliness were of the same order as the greatness which He came to manifest. When one considers this greatness in His life, in His passion, in His obscurity, in His death, in the calling of His own, in their desertion, in His secret resurrection, and the rest, one will see it so great that there will be no reason to be shocked at a lowliness which does not belong to the same order.

Pascal and his unique achievement are not understood, however, unless we recognize the importance of the fact that all his life he was a sick man. From his infancy he suffered from tuberculosis of the bones; and “suffered” must be understood in its most literal and explicit sense. Increasingly, the disease thrust itself upon his consciousness, until he arrived at the condition in which he had never a waking moment free from pain. Voltaire says: “Poor Pascal, one can see that you are diseased.” And with the coarseness which the moderns mistake for



## PROPHETS FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT

moral courage, Mr. Aldous Huxley says, "In Pascal's neighbourhood there is a bit of a smell." But Pascal's dignity makes your Voltaires and your Huxleys sound a little shrill.

"It is not disgraceful for a man to yield to pain, and it is disgraceful to yield to pleasure. . . . Pain does not tempt and attract us. It is we ourselves who choose it voluntarily, and will it to prevail over us. So that we are masters of the situation ; and in this man yields to himself. But in pleasure it is man who yields to pleasure. . . . At the last a little earth is thrown upon our heads, and that is the end for ever. . . . We shall die alone. . . . Between us and heaven or hell there is only life, which is the frailest thing in the world."

This incomparable genius and saint was thirty-nine years and three months old when he died.

In the post-Renaissance France in which Pascal lived Catholic Christianity had become merely a part of life. Weary of war in the name of faith, men at last insisted on peace at any price ; if necessary, at the price of faith. They would have religion only so long as it was a buttress of the secular order, of France and the King. Earlier than the English, Frenchmen learned that religion, taken seriously, led to strife and sedition. In its relation to the Huguenots Catholicism was overwhelmingly dominant, but in their relation to government, and to secular society and worldly culture in general, the Church and its officials had become completely subservient. Not only as an organized institution, but also intellectually and morally, the Church had been overcome of the world.

As Pascal died before he was forty, it is well that his scientific and mathematical powers developed early.

Remarkable stories are told of his youthful precocity. It is symbolical of much in his personality that, kept by his father from the books of Euclid and other mathematicians, he invented or discovered, unaided, the first thirty-two propositions of Euclid's first book. He was always a philosopher rather than a scholar; no learner or reader, but a thinker. His knowledge, indeed, was never very extensive. He read little outside the Bible and a little theology, except Montaigne. A very large proportion of his quotations from earlier writers can be found in that author, but there is no evidence that he had read anything like the whole of his works. Of forty-one easily recognized quotations from or allusions to Montaigne, one half are from five essays; his favourite essay was, easily, that in defence of Raimond de Sebonde. It is no accident that this is the most sceptical essay Montaigne ever wrote.

Among the earliest writers to be influenced by Montaigne were Shakespeare and Bacon. It has been claimed, indeed, that the greatest of all English writers not only borrowed generously from Montaigne, but that the whole characteristic quality of his mind was deeply imbued with his scepticism. But it is the seventeenth-century French writers who owe most to him. So that in submitting to his influence, Pascal did what others did. But it is characteristic of his strong personality not, as one has said, that the influence of Montaigne did not go very deep, but that his reaction to that influence was unique in its quality and strength.

Pascal's work in geometry is not yet dead, but his most important contribution to science was the brilliant

experimental work by which he confirmed Torricelli's speculation that the height of a column of mercury in a barometer is due to the pressure of the air. In September, 1648, he arranged that a barometer tube should be carried up the Puy-de-Dôme. The mercury fell steadily in the tube. So it was demonstrated once for all that the mediaeval theory that "Nature abhors a vacuum" is but a vain invention.

Much of Pascal's writing, then, can be viewed from the point of view that he was a scientist putting forward Christianity as a solution of the problem of human destiny. His mind was, to a large extent, formed—not only so far as its contents were concerned, but also in its shape and quality—by his scientific studies. He contemplates the whole of Nature in its full and grand majesty. Its infinity is the "greatest sensible mark of the majesty of God." What is man in the infinite?

Then he contemplates the infinitely little, and man between those two abysses, "a Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing, a mean between nothing and everything." This is one reason, though by no means the only one, for that deep scepticism, that knowledge that we do not know, and that conviction that we cannot know, which, as we shall see, is an essential part of Pascal's thought. "In comparison with these Infinities all finites are equal, and I see no reason for fixing our imagination on one more than on another."

The greatness of the universe, and the littleness of man in the face of the universe—a thought with which Sir J. H. Jeans has tried to make our flesh creep—has

been by no writer more impressively expressed than by Pascal.

“When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space which I can fill, and even can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I am ignorant, and which know me not, I am frightened, and am astonished at being here rather than there; for there is no reason why here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who has put me here? By whose order and direction have this place and time been allotted to me? *Memoria hospitis unius diei praetereuntis*. . . . The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me.”

But the complementary truth that there is an order of reality in which man is great, not small, is recognized in a way which some modern writers would do well to notice. “If we would say that man is too insignificant to deserve communion with God,” he writes, “we must indeed be very great to judge of it.”

Pascal, however, was not only a scientist of great genius and achievement but also a man of fashion. This is not such a contradiction, such a dissipation of spiritual energy and intellectual interest, as it may seem at first sight. It was an age in which it was fashionable not to be frivolous and licentious, but to be learned and intellectual. Doubtless it was all a little superficial. Men and women talked of books more than they read them. They preferred to imitate in fancy dress what they imagined to be the costumes of the Roman republic, and to have summer houses like classical temples, rather than to study the poets, orators, and philosophers of the ancient world. But Platonism and Stoicism had a real vogue among the “best people” (can one find a

more adequate translation of *honnêtes hommes*?), as Aristotelianism ruled the philosophers and theologians. Pascal was much interested in, and had a high regard for, Epictetus, the slave who had taught ethics in second-century Rome. But it is not quite certain whether he read him, either in the original or in a translation, or, as is more probable, whether his knowledge of the greatest of the Stoics was dependent entirely on Montaigne.

The Stoics taught the nobility of man, that his reason can find the truth and control his passions, and that his blessedness depends upon himself alone. Pascal has much to say on these matters. He recognizes that for most men Stoicism is a counsel of despair. They can attain neither to such self-control nor to such indifference to fortune. It has no message for any but the wise few. Indeed, he discovers a fundamental contradiction between their theory that man's blessedness depends on himself alone and their advice that in certain circumstances he should commit suicide. "Oh! what a happy life," he exclaims, "from which we are to free ourselves as from the plague!" But he sees that the real weakness of Stoicism is that man is not noble, as it teaches. It is not in our power to rule our desires. We not only do not desire the good, but we cannot bring ourselves to desire it.

The Stoicism which was popular in the French Catholic world of the early seventeenth century failed through an uncritical belief in man's natural greatness. Montaigne's influence was more dangerous because it made complete scepticism the ground of an indifference

which meant sloth and spiritual despair. Montaigne's was perhaps the most thoroughly sceptical mind that ever developed within a professedly Christian society. Rabelais is too indignant; it shows that he thinks some things are important. Voltaire argues too much, which implies that he believes in reason. Hume gives his case away by admitting that his practical life is a conscious denial of his sceptical theory. Montaigne is formidable not so much because he mocks at holy things—Pascal speaks of his *mots lascifs*, his rather free and licentious opinions on some relations of life, and his cowardly and unmanly conception of death—but in that he is quite content to be a mere onlooker at the human drama. His is the ultimate scepticism which, because it has no standards of judgment, does not care whether life is a tragedy or a comedy. It will not take the trouble either to doubt or to believe. As Pascal puts it, the substance of Montaigne's opinions consists in a doubt that is doubtful of itself. He does not care. He sits in the easy chair of a wavering and unstable indifference. And Pascal has been there too. "It is not in Montaigne but in myself," he says, "that I find all that I see in him." And to this scepticism—"the pride of reason so thoroughly baffled by its own weapons"—he opposes, as we shall see, the paradoxical conviction that religion is more important than all else beside, and that Christianity recognizes, nay, boasts, that it cannot be based upon reason. The philosophers teach men either the greatness or the littleness of man. If they are filled with thoughts of his greatness, how far short do their conceptions fall below the revelations of the Gospel, which

show that a price no less than the death of a God has been paid for him! And if they lay stress on the infirmities of our nature, their ideas still come short of the actual misery of sin, for which that death is alone seen to be a remedy.

Pascal produced only two books on religion or, to speak more exactly, he published a series of letters and he left a large number of notes, not arranged in order, for what he had intended, if death had not intervened, should be a complete Defence of Christianity. The former is the book known to the world, though read by few, as the *Provincial Letters*, a masterpiece of French prose. The notes for an Apology for the Faith, known as the *Pensées* of Pascal, have been read by millions, and are still a living religious influence.

The *Provincial Letters* were written against the Jesuits, or, rather, against a tendency which existed in that order in seventeenth-century Paris. Their zeal for souls, that they might be won for the Church and, when won, kept within her obedience, led them to relax, as far as might be, the demands of Christian discipline. The Jesuit confessors acted on the principle that any conduct or behaviour is permitted if it is possible to find one Catholic theologian who would not condemn it.

Pascal's sister Jacqueline was one of the solitaries of Port Royal, and he was in friendly association with them. For several reasons they had come to be in definite opposition to the Jesuits. They conducted a boys' school, for example, of which Racine was the most famous pupil, the principles of which differ widely from those of the Jesuit schools. What attracted many to

them, however, and repelled many, was their strictness of life, their Puritan outlook in ethics, and the heroic courage with which they defended an uncompromising standard of Christian behaviour. Pascal never joined Port Royal, as he was never, in the technical sense, a Jansenist. But he was, by temperament and conviction, attracted by their self-denying unworldliness. He is a Puritan in whom humanism keeps breaking out. All great amusements are dangerous to the Christian life, he says, but none is more to be feared than the theatre; and yet he was greatly influenced by Corneille's *Polyeucte*. He persuaded himself that he had no feeling for poetry and despised art. What is style to such a man? But "when we see a natural style we are astonished and delighted; for we expect to see an author and we find a man." And in another place he says: "Man is full of wants: he loves only those who can satisfy them all." From which it follows that he is attracted, not to a mathematician, not to a soldier, but to an upright man who can accommodate himself generally to all sides of his nature. Pascal, himself, is an admirable illustration of such comprehensiveness and versatility.

Port Royal, in contrast with the Jesuits, put the standard of Christian obligation as high as might be. They would make religion attractive by making it difficult. So the practice of their confessors was directly opposed to that of the Jesuits. And this Pascal defends. The existence of sacramental confession means that as the Church has part in offences God has associated her with pardon. "But if she absolves or binds without God she is no longer the Church." It seemed to him that



the Jesuits meant that the Church must neither judge men's motives, because only God knows what they are, nor their behaviour, because only motives and conscience are religiously important. So, as none are excluded from the Church, the Jesuits retain those whom the Jews, and even the heathen, would have banished as unworthy or abhorred as impious. How convinced he is of the laxity of some spiritual directors appears from the fact that he thinks it worth while to write : it is not absolution only which remits sins by the sacrament of penance, but contrition.

Pascal's close association with Port Royal meant that he was at home in a Jansenist atmosphere ; his first *Provincial Letters* were written in defence of M. Arnauld, who had been condemned as a Jansenist. Jansenism laid almost as much stress on the irresistible grace of God as Calvin had done, but there seems little doubt that Arnauld was condemned not only, or chiefly, because it had been proved that he held heretical doctrines, but because he stood for an ideal of austere strictness in Catholic behaviour which was unacceptable to the dominant party in French Catholicism. Pascal was not a learned theologian. The first few letters give the impression that he is writing to a brief—bringing the resources of his wit and style to expound theological distinctions more important to others than to himself. He supports their teaching because he is attracted by their religion and their life. What emerges, however, is not a compromise between the Augustinian denial of human freedom and the Jesuit emphasis on it, but an essentially sound and truly Christian doctrine—the doc-

trine, indeed, of St. Thomas—that a good act is not partly of divine grace and partly of human freedom, in the sense that the more grace the less freedom and the more freedom the less grace, but that the grace of God meets, quickens, encourages, works through man's freedom: the more grace, the more freedom. "Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you."

To risk condemnation by defending M. Arnauld, by associating with Port Royal, and encouraging the solitaries of that society, as he once did, to challenge ecclesiastical authority, was a very serious thing for one who had Pascal's faith in the Church. He believed that there was no salvation apart from the Pope—"I will never sever myself from his communion," he wrote—and he recognized to the full that every Christian is entirely dependent on Catholic tradition. Like the great Catholic saints and mystics, he is very sensitive lest the direct experience of God which, as we shall see, was to him the heart and reality of personal religion, should prove itself an eccentric delusion by implying what was alien to the authoritative teaching of the Church. He would have agreed with Mother Julian when she said that in the revelations which came to her she was not stirred nor led from the common teaching of Holy Church—"in no manner of point, but I had therein teaching to love it and find it good." And yet he is prepared to risk all this—nothing less than his eternal salvation, as he believed—in his devotion to truth. He is certain that some things are bad, whoever says they are good. He will appeal from the present judgment of those in

authority, not only to the Church of the past, but also to the Church of the future. "We must cry out so much the louder, the more unjustly we are censured, and the more violently they would stifle speech, until there come a Pope who hears both parties, and who consults antiquity to do justice. So the good Popes will find the Church still in outcry." There is the true prophetic note in the cry: "If my letters are condemned in Rome, that which I condemn is condemned in heaven." And then, in a sentence which goes ringing down the centuries, "*Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello.*" He possesses the truth, and is possessed by it, and no man shall take it away.

Two years before his death he began to plan an Apology for Christianity. He withdrew from the dispute on Grace and Predestination—the last of the authentic *Provincial Letters* is left unfinished—and prepared to combat, not only "the regular heretics" (which may mean the Protestants), but also the ungodly and the atheists. He had already collected much material on the truth of the Catholic religion. He had had a good deal of intercourse with unbelievers, so he knew the strong points of their position, as well as its weaknesses, and how to persuade them. For that was his object: to win back these straying sheep to the fold of the Church, and thus extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ and bring about the glory of God and the salvation of souls. If only men of learning and honesty would leave their wretched quarrels and unite in a common effort against infidelity and heresy! The book, alas, was never written. He left the materials for it—

thoughts, arguments, reasons—jotted down at different times and without any order, just as they had come into his mind. And the world has had to make the best it could of them, only thankful that it has what it has.

The heart of Pascal's religion, so intensely individual, never losing the fervour and sincerity of his great soul, but always delivered from self by the certainty of God in Christ, was a personal experience. When he died there was found, sewn in his doublet, so that he always carried it with him, a fragment on which was a fiery cross surrounded by these extraordinary words :

The year of grace, 1654

Monday the 23rd of November, the day of St. Clement, pope  
and martyr, and others in the martyrology

The eve of St. Chrysogonus, martyr, and others,  
From about half past ten in the evening until about half  
an hour after midnight

Fire

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob

Not of the philosophers and scholars

Certainty Certainty Feeling Joy Peace

God of Jesus Christ

*Deum meum et Deum vestrum*

Thy God shall be my God

Forgotten of the world and by all except God.

He is not found except by the paths taught in the Gospel  
Greatness of the human soul.

Holy Father, the world has not known Thee, but I have  
known Thee

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy

I am separated from it.

*Dereliquerunt me fontem aquae vivae*

My God wilt Thou leave me ?

That I should not be separated from Him eternally.

## PROPHETS FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT

This is life eternal that they should know Thee the only  
true God and Him Thou hast sent J.C.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ

I am far from Him ; I have denied Him crucified  
That I may never be far from Him.

He will only be apprehended by the ways taught in the  
Gospel.

Renunciation full and sweet

Full submission to Jesus Christ and to my director.

An eternity of joy for one day of self-mastery on earth.

*Non obliviscar sermones tuos.*

This is the record of his conversion, of his soul won to God from self. It was not the flight of the alone to the Alone, but the winning of one brought up in the Catholic tradition by One Who had revealed Himself in that tradition. But faith is more than something received and remembered ; while far from ignoring that or separating itself from it, it finds itself in a definite experience, with a clear beginning and a time when it ceased to be.

It was an experience of great reality and intensity, of communion so close as only just to stop short of union, the soul almost lost in God. That is the implication of the word "Fire" in the light of its use by the mystics. He is the God who called Abraham His friend, whose choosing of the patriarchs is the guarantee of their immortality, whose choosing of us is the assurance of our reality and value. And the assurance of that is not speculation or learning, but the religious experience which *this* philosopher and scholar recognizes to be, not only the most precious thing he has ever known, but also one which he shares with every humble believer.

*Abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus et revelasti ea parvulis.*

In experience, not in theory, in "feeling," not in speculation, is our certainty of God (O taste and see how gracious the Lord is!), and the "objectivity" of our feeling is guaranteed to us, not by the patriarchs and their lives, but by that most precious life and personality of Jesus Christ. It is the greatness of the human soul that it is capable of such experience of the eternal and infinite God; that marks it off as of a different order from the world which "has not known Thee." This communion is joy unutterable. It is his one prayer that he may never be separated from God.

It is clear that the immediate circumstance of this converting experience was meditation on the great "high priestly prayer" of our Lord in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Communion with God in Jesus Christ is, as the third verse of that chapter has taught men once for all, the substance of the life which is so real that time and change cannot touch it. Pascal longs to know more of that. He has a penitent sense of his failure in it. Now and always he emphasized—with an exclusiveness which is foreign to the general Catholic tradition—that the only divine revelation which can be trusted is that which comes through Jesus Christ. He will gladly give up all else for His sake. He will submit himself entirely to Him and—remembering his shortcomings—to his director! Pascal's self-distrust is one of the central elements in his personality.

The knowledge of this experience, and of the certainty which was rooted in it, is essential for the understanding

of Pascal. It was because he had this, because he could never forget it, because he would not let himself forget it (he wore it always, sewn up in his clothes), that he dared to go the farthest lengths in intellectual and even moral scepticism. There was no question he could not ask, no hedge he dared not look over, no abyss into which he would not look, no denial he was afraid to face. He knew. He had tasted. "*Certitude Certitude Sentiment Oubly du monde et de tout, hormis Dieu . . . Que je n'en sois pas separé eternellement.*" "The heart has its reasons that reason does not know."

In this Pascal was quite sound. The merely negative character of much in the tradition of European philosophy is due to its inadequate recognition of religious experience. Reality can never be proved, it must always be experienced. And the recognition of this is behind much of what Pascal says of the "heart." No certainty is possible without experience, and the man who has experienced is left cold by the denial of sceptics and unbelievers, especially when his own experience is confirmed for him by the common witness of the Church. Man's conviction of truth does not depend entirely, or indeed mainly, on his reasoning. Very few of our beliefs rest on demonstration. And demonstration would, at best, convince only the intellect. Our strongest beliefs rest on custom; we yield to that without thinking. The non-rational part of our nature has much to do with our convictions. How dependent we are, for example, on external conditions—on kneeling to pray, on using our lips to pray, and so on! It humbles our pride to realize that our beliefs rest on such non-

rational foundations. To depend entirely on externals is superstition, but to refuse to depend on them is pride.

It is this non-rational part of our nature that Pascal calls the heart. It is the ground of the fundamental certainties on which reason works. We know, for example, that we are not dreaming. The fact that we cannot prove it shows the limitation of our reasoning powers, not the uncertainty of our knowledge. It is by such direct, first-hand experience that we know God. God is felt by the heart, not demonstrated by reason. Just as a man's self-love is not based on reason and can hardly be shaken by it, so is his experience of God. The heart stands firm when the reason is shaken. "God puts religion into the mind by reason," says Pascal, "and into the heart by grace." What we have to do, first of all, is to show that religion is not contrary to reason. To use a dictum of Newman's, the function of the intellect in religion is to remove the difficulties which the intellect has created. Then we must make religion lovable; make good men hope that it is true. And, finally, we must prove that it is true. Faith cannot contradict reason and ordinary experience (there are times, indeed, when he says that the true religion *is* contrary to nature and to common sense), but it goes beyond them, seeing more than they can see, and believing more than they can substantiate. The metaphysical proofs of God are of little use. They are so complicated that no one could build an abiding confidence on them. It is impossible, Pascal holds—and Newman would agree with him—"to prove divinity from the works



of nature." Those who have living faith in their hearts see it confirmed by the observation of nature and history. But to try to convince the unbelievers—those without faith and grace—that the world shows clearly that there is a God, "is to give them ground for believing that the proofs of our religion are very weak." Scripture declares "that God is a hidden God, and that since the corruption of nature He has left men in a darkness from which they can escape only through Jesus Christ, without whom all communion with God is cut off. *Nemo novit Patrem nisi Filius, et cui voluerit Filius revelare.*"

Scripture says that those who seek God find Him. The evidence of God then cannot be as clear as the sun. *Vere Tu es Deus absconditus.* No canonical writer has ever made use of nature to prove God. It is true, in a sense, for some souls to whom God gives this light, that the heavens and the birds prove God, yet it is false with respect to the majority of men. Similarly, when Christ came, His divinity was clear only to those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. The prophets said that He would be slighted, that none would think that it was He, that He would be a stone of stumbling upon whom many would stumble.

The same facts disprove God to some and prove Him to others. The only argument the Jews can bring to support their rejection of Jesus Christ is that He has been slain. He has failed. He has not subdued the heathen with His might. He has not bestowed on us their spoil. He does not give riches. But it is in this respect, Pascal says, that He is lovable to me. "I would not desire Him whom they fancy." "Of all that is on

earth, He partakes only of the sorrows, not of the joys. He loves His neighbours, but His love does not confine itself to those limits, and overflows to His own enemies, and then to those of God."

The foundation-stone of Pascal's defence of Christianity is His conviction of man's desperate need, the indubitable fact of his utter corruption. When Pascal considers him, he is cast into despair. Both his senses and his reason are untrustworthy. They deceive him and lead him into error. Man loves himself, but he does not deserve such love. He cannot prevent himself from being small and miserable and imperfect. So he comes to hate the truth which reproves him, and which convinces him of his faults. He does his best to hide these faults both from himself and from others, and he cannot bear either that they should point them out to him or that they should see them. Our self-love is obviously false, but it is innate.

We are more easily led into vice than into virtue. "The example of Alexander's chastity has not made so many continent as that of his drunkenness has made intemperate. It is not shameful not to be as virtuous as he, and it seems excusable not to be more vicious." "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." And the cause of all our ills is the poverty of our feeble and mortal condition, so miserable that nothing can comfort us when we think of it closely. That explains why we love sensations and diversions. We dare not be quiet and consider ourselves. "If our condition were truly happy, we would not need diversion from thinking of it in order to make ourselves happy." The

truth is that man is fallen, lost, evil, corrupt, weak, helpless.

The natural accompaniment and result of Pascal's pessimism about human nature and its powers is a complete and thorough-going scepticism. Such a creature as he is can comprehend neither the vastness of the universe nor the beginnings of existence. Our impotence limits us in every way. "Too much sound deafens us; too much light dazzles us; too great distance or proximity hinders our view. . . . Too much truth is paralysing (I know some who cannot understand that to take four from nothing leaves nothing). First principles are too self-evident for us . . . too many concords are annoying in music; too many benefits irritate us." And because our own nature baffles our understanding, we can know nothing else. "Man cannot conceive what the body is, still less what the mind is, and least of all how a body should be united to a mind."

But scepticism need not rely only on theory, it can appeal to the obvious fact of the complete disagreement of the philosophical schools on the supremely important subject of the nature of the soul's sovereign good, the chief end of man. "One says that the sovereign good consists in virtue, another in pleasure, another in the knowledge of nature, another in truth, another in total ignorance, another in indolence, another in wondering at nothing, and the true sceptics in their indifference, doubt, and perpetual suspense, and others, wiser, think to find a better definition." Such disagreement fills us with dismay. Our trust in our own insight and reason is shaken, we are put into suspense and surprise, when

another sees exactly the opposite, and "still more when a thousand others deride our choice."

We are led astray by our imagination—"that mistress of error and falsity"—"the more deceptive that she is not always; for she would be an infallible rule of truth if she were an infallible rule of falsehood." How easily is man deceived, and his reason overthrown! Some men err because they are prejudiced in favour of old ways, others run rashly after novelties. Bodily sickness distorts the senses and perverts the judgment. And when our own interests are involved we cannot see what is true and right. We recognize the bias of others, but not our own. We pity Turks, heretics, and infidels, following blindly the way of their fathers for no other reason than that it is the way of their fathers. But what of ourselves? And what meaning can there be in human life and history? If Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the whole aspect of the world would have been altered.

"All the dignity of man consists in thought. Thought is therefore by its nature a wonderful and incomparable thing. . . . But what is this thought? How foolish it is! . . . Do not wonder if at present it does not reason well; a fly is buzzing in its ears; that is enough to render it incapable of good judgment. . . . What a chimera then is man! What a novelty! What a monster, what a chaos, what a contradiction, what a prodigy! Judge of all things, imbecile worm of the earth; depository of truth, a sink of uncertainty and error; the pride and refuse of the universe! Who will unravel this tangle? Nature confutes the sceptics, and reason confutes the dogmatists."

If we say man knows nothing, we are at least asserting that he knows one thing—namely, that he knows

nothing. We must recognize, however, that reason is weak, that there are an infinite number of things beyond its grasp, and that the wise thing is to know when to doubt, when to feel certain, and when to yield to authority.

The common mark of limited reason apprehending unlimited truth is paradox. Pascal is one of the greatest masters of paradox in all literature. He says that the sight of God's justice to the outcast ought to offend us less than that of His mercy to the elect. Few men speak humbly of humility, he says truly, or chastely of chastity, or doubtingly of scepticism. And he is even nearer the truth when he says that discourses on scepticism cause believers to affirm. He gives us an insight into the nature of paradox when he says that all the principles of atheists and sceptics are true, but their conclusions are false, because the opposite principles are true. "At the end of each truth the opposite truth is to be remembered."

Even more paradoxical are the ethical truths that Pascal propounds. "Self-will will never be satisfied, though it should have command of all it would; but we are satisfied from the moment we renounce it." "Nothing is easier, according to the world, than to live in high office and great wealth; nothing is more difficult than to live in them according to God, and without acquiring an interest in them and a liking for them." But deepest and highest of all is the religious paradox, for there the thought of man is face to face with the infinite. Jesus Christ, says Pascal, came to blind those who saw clearly, and to give sight to the blind; to heal

the sick, and to leave the healthy to die; to justify sinners, and to leave the righteous in their sins; to fill the needy, and leave the rich empty. Who had ever more renown? Jews foretold His coming, and after His coming, Gentiles worshipped Him. But, of His thirty-three years on earth, He lived thirty without appearing, for three years He passed as an impostor, and, finally, He died, betrayed by one of His own disciples, denied by another, and forsaken by all.

But the greatest paradox of all is man, and all the deepest thinkers of the Renaissance recognized it. So Shakespeare says, through the mouth of Hamlet, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; no, nor woman neither." Pascal not only affirms both sides of that paradox—infinite in faculties, quintessence of dust—with equal lucidity and vigour, but he gives an unrivalled explanation of the paradox. Man is capable of little and of much, of all and of nothing; he is neither angel nor brute, but man. The sad thing is that he who would act the angel acts the brute. There is in him a nature capable of good, but this capacity is barren. He can know the truth and be happy, but he possesses no truth, either constant or satisfactory. The greatness of man is proved by his wretchedness. For who is unhappy at not being a king, except a deposed king? Man is fallen. There are two truths of faith,

equally certain. Man is so great that he speaks his divine origin; God made him, and is mindful of him. As the Scripture says: *Deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum*. And man is so evil, weak and mean, that he cannot be what God meant him to be. The root of all error, as a true theory of knowledge recognizes, is impatience and self-will. Even death would have no sting but for sin. The meaning of the paradox is that man is a fallen child of God.

All men seek happiness, and the testimony of them all—the universal human witness—is that without faith they cannot be happy. All men, rich and poor, princes and subjects, old and young, learned and ignorant, healthy and sick, of all countries, all times, all ages, and all conditions, complain that happiness escapes them. Surely this longing for blessedness and inability to attain it proclaim that there was once in man a true happiness of which there now remain to him only the mark and empty trace. “The infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God Himself.”

Man's failure to find his true good, in spite of all his efforts, leads him to the Redeemer. God created man holy, innocent, perfect. He communicated to him His glory and His wonders. The eye of man saw the majesty of God. But he was not able to live on such a level without falling into pride. He would make himself his own centre, make himself equal to God, by finding his happiness in himself. Man is now become like the brutes—so estranged from God that there scarce remains in him a dim vision of his Author. His chief

maladies are pride, which takes him away from God, and lust, which binds him to earth.

There is no hope, help, except what God himself provides. Christianity proclaims to the most ungodly that they are capable of the grace of the Redeemer. It makes those tremble whom it justifies, and consoles those whom it condemns. "Happiness is neither within us nor without us. It is in God, both without us and within us." "True religion," Pascal says elsewhere, "consists in annihilating self before that Universal Being, whom we have so often provoked, and who can justly destroy us at any time; in recognizing that we can do nothing without Him, and have deserved nothing from Him but His displeasure. It consists in knowing that there is an unconquerable opposition between us and God, and that without a mediator there can be no communion with Him."

It is the reality of this our fallen state that we love, we can love, nothing but ourselves. Is it not mocking our wretchedness, then, to tell us to love God? Not so, Pascal says. We must hate ourselves, for we are hateful because of sin. But we cannot love what is outside ourselves. We must love One who is in us, and is not ourselves. "The kingdom of God is within us; the universal good is within us, is ourselves—and not ourselves." We, Christians, love Jesus Christ, whose body we are, and we love ourselves; in some sense we do right to love ourselves, because we are members of Christ. He that is joined unto God is one spirit. "All is one, one is in the other, like the Three Persons."

Pascal's case for Christianity rests on two foundations :



the reality of the Fall, recognized by many obvious proofs, and the proclamation of Redemption, offered nowhere except in Christ. The Incarnation reveals to man how great is his misery, because of the greatness of the remedy provided for it. But it also reveals to man how great he is, because so great a remedy was provided for him. All faith consists in Jesus Christ and in Adam, misery and blessedness, the Fall and Salvation. Because He unites in Himself two natures, human and divine, He is able to be a Mediator, redeeming man from corruption and uniting him to God. It is not for such as we are to object that we cannot be made capable of union with God. We have no right to set limits to the mercy of God. He is revealed as "a God of love and comfort, a God who fills the soul and heart of those whom He possesses, a God who makes them conscious of their inward wretchedness, and His infinite mercy, who unites Himself to their inmost soul, who fills it with humility and joy, with confidence and love, who renders them incapable of any other end than himself."

Man cannot save himself. He is fallen and corrupt. He needs one who is God and Man to save him—a Mediator. So far Pascal's argument has great force. But how shall we know that Jesus of Nazareth is, in fact, the Mediator whom we need? The evidence that He is the God-Man is not so compelling, so coercive and indubitable, as some would like. The evidences of religion are, indeed, very perplexing. "Nature presents to me nothing which is not matter of doubt and concern," says Pascal. "If I saw nothing there which

revealed a Divinity, I would come to a negative conclusion ; if I saw everywhere the signs of a Creator, I would remain peacefully in faith. But seeing too much to deny and too little to be sure, I am in a state to be pitied. . . . Nature should say everything or nothing, that I might see which cause I ought to follow." The strange thing, indeed, is that Christianity does not boast of having a clear view of God, or of possessing it open and unveiled, but, on the contrary, says that he has hidden himself from men's knowledge, and that this is in fact the name that He is given in Scripture : " Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." On the one hand He has set up in the Church visible signs to make Himself known to those who seek Him sincerely, and on the other hand He has nevertheless so disguised them that He will only be perceived by those who seek Him with all their heart. Two kinds of people know Him : those who have a humble heart, and who love lowliness, whatever kind of intellect they may have, high or low ; and those who have sufficient understanding to see the truth, whatever opposition they may have to it. He hides Himself to those who tempt Him, and He reveals Himself to those who seek Him. This is the meaning of Pascal's hard saying : We understand nothing of the works of God, if we do not take it as a principle that He has willed to blind some, and enlighten others. Pascal emphasizes the truth that it is they who seek who find, and his explanation of this is that God wills rather to incline the will than the intellect. What would coerce the intellect would harm the will. He claims that it is impossible that those who love God with all their heart

should fail to recognize the Church, so evident is she ; but it is impossible that those who do not love God should be convinced of the Church. He states the same principle, not theologically but philosophically, when he says that if we submit everything to reason, our religion will have no mysterious and supernatural element, while if we offend the principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous.

So when Pascal asserts that we know God only by Jesus Christ, the Mediator, and that in proof of Jesus Christ we have prophecies, types, and miracles, he is not only content to admit, but goes out of his way to proclaim, that these proofs do not coerce the intellect unless there is also the "will to believe." They are not absolutely convincing, but neither is it unreasonable to believe them. There is evidence and obscurity to enlighten some and confuse others. It is not to be expected, indeed, that Pascal, a Roman Catholic of the early seventeenth century, should write of prophecies, types, and miracles, as though he shared the modern critical, historical, and scientific point of view. But much that he says is still stimulating and interesting. You must interpret a religion, he says, by its most spiritual, least carnal, adherents. There is a type of Jew, for example, who expects Messiah to be a great temporal prince, just as there is a type of Christian who believes that Jesus Christ gave us sacraments which shall do everything without our help, dispensing us from the love of God. But true Jews and true Christians have always believed in a Messiah who should make them love God, and by that love triumph over their enemies.

And by enemies they have always understood "the sins that do so easily beset us."

There are, he says, two errors in the consideration of the Old Testament in relation to Jesus Christ, for the understanding of its prophecies and types. One is to take everything literally; but it is equally an error to take everything spiritually. When we read the Old Testament as a religious book—not merely as students of literature or history—each one finds what he has most at heart, "temporal benefits or spiritual, God or the creatures." Reading the stories of the deliverance from Egypt, of the defeat of kings, of the manna, of the whole genealogy of Abraham, the religious man sees that He was able to send down bread from heaven, able to save, etc. And he recognizes that these things are types of "true freedom," a "true Israelite," "true circumcision," "true bread from heaven," etc.

Some of this Biblical typology, even in the Book of Common Prayer, is rather far-fetched. But few could read Pascal's description of Joseph as a type of Christ without being impressed by it.

"Jesus Christ typified by Joseph, the beloved of his father, sent by his father to see his brethren, innocent, sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver, and thereby becoming their lord, their saviour, the saviour of strangers and the saviour of the world; which had not been but for their plot to destroy him, their sale and rejection of him.

"In prison Joseph innocent between two criminals; Jesus Christ on the cross between two thieves. Joseph foretells freedom to the one and death to the other, from the same omens. Jesus Christ saves the elect, and condemns the out-cast, for the same sins. Joseph foretells only; Jesus Christ acts. Joseph asks who will be saved to remember him, when

he comes into his glory ; and he whom Jesus Christ saves asks that He will remember him when He comes into His kingdom."

Mr. T. S. Eliot, in his illuminating introduction to the *Pensées* in the Everyman edition, claims that Pascal's method is that of the typical Christian apologist, but makes the reservation that his belief in miracles plays a larger part in his construction than it would in that, at least, of a modern liberal Catholic. That is probably true. "How I hate those who make men doubt of miracles!" says Pascal. "However it may be, the Church is without proofs if they are right." No modern "liberal Catholic" would write like that. But as the "construction" of liberal Catholicism has passed through somewhat kaleidoscopic changes during the last half-century, this disagreement may not be very important. The time has come when any Catholicism which can claim to be liberal, in the sense that it seeks to express the Faith without unnecessary contrast with what is well established in modern history and science, must formulate some positive philosophy of miracle. It is not enough merely to minimize its importance, as we have tended to do. For any belief in a sacramental universe, and in prayer which includes petition and intercession, as well as any theism which is distinguishable from pantheism, will not find it easy to establish themselves apart from some belief in miracle. Pascal was quite right when he said : "Miracles are not useless ; on the contrary, they are fundamental."

The first criticism that such a view has to meet is that the miracles recorded in the gospels are not used by our

Lord Himself as proofs of the truth of His teaching, or as credentials to support His claims. To cast Himself from the pinnacle of the Temple was a temptation of the Devil which He recognized as such. He often told those who had been healed, with a certain emphasis, to see that they told no one of their good fortune. He always refused to give a sign from heaven, and called the Pharisees and Sadducees a wicked and adulterous generation because they asked for one. It is quite clear that Luke is right, as against Matthew, in his understanding "the sign of the Prophet Jonah," not as a forecast of the resurrection after three days, but as an argument that as the people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, the Pharisees and Sadducees were guilty in refusing to heed a greater than Jonah. In other words, it was a refusal of a miraculous sign.

It is noteworthy, perhaps, in this connection, that He did not come down from the cross, that the priests might see and believe. Most interesting of all, however, is the fact that the recorded appearances of the Risen Christ—with the important exception of that to St. Paul on the Damascus road—were all to those who were already His followers. It has seemed to some a weakness in the evidence for the Resurrection that no opponent or unbiassed person, if such an one could have been found at that time, saw Him after He rose from the dead. In the light of what has been said, we can see that it is "in character" that He did not rise from the dead to convince unbelievers. It would not have been the same Jesus who would have appeared to the Roman governor to terrify him, or to the High Priest to convince him

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that he had been wrong. What an opportunity He missed! The Roman Empire might have been Christian from the beginning, and God's ancient people, the Jews, might have accepted the Messiah. And many who now oppose Christianity might be able to believe. Pascal sees through this delusion, however: "One says that a miracle would strengthen his faith. He says it when he does not see one." Our Lord Himself said, in one of the sayings which have made little impression on the Church, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

It is almost completely true, although Pascal never quite reaches the point of saying it, that miracles have their significance within the Christian life and mind, rather than to those outside. He draws our attention, indeed, to the fact that Jesus Christ said: "Rejoice not in your miracles, but because your names are written in heaven." But the deceitful heart of man was never won from pride and selfishness by miracles, and it was the foundation of Pascal's apologetic that it is conversion that matters. He says that the Christian religion has powerful evidences—saints, martyrs, good lives, learned doctors, and miracles—but it declares that it is not by the appeal of these to the mind that men are changed and made capable of knowing and loving God, "but the power of the foolishness of the cross without wisdom and signs." It is lack of love, he says, which makes us not believe the true miracles: "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep" (John x. 26). Faith is not produced by miracles—indeed, it is neces-

sary, as a pre-requisite, if they are to be accepted—but it depends upon them. Faith really means believing that goodness is powerful, that the power behind the world is good. So the beginning of faith is that something in us is attracted by Jesus Christ, by His life, His teaching, the self-giving that did not stop short even at death, so that we call Him “Lord,” and we want it to be true that God is like that, that He is God, that the Love that is expressed in His life and death is the strongest thing in the universe. That is what it means to say—“I believe in God the Father Almighty”—and we want it to be true.

Jesus Christ taught men to see the proof of God’s goodness in the ordinary happenings of nature and in the everyday events of human life. It is of God’s love, generous and indiscriminating, that the sun shines and the rain falls. The regularity which science describes as natural law He interprets as love. And surely He is right in that, for unless nature were dependable and uniform, and unless similar causes produced similar effects, life would be impossible. St. Paul’s teaching is not in any way different from that of his Master on this point: “All things work together for good to them that love God.” But it is only those who love who recognize love. “The love of Jesus what it is, none but those who love Him know.” As we have seen, Nature does not reveal God except to those who seek Him. To His own, their ordinary needs are satisfied by their Heavenly Father by the accustomed methods of His love—by natural means, as we say. But they know that He is at every moment active in the world



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to use all the power that is necessary to secure the effective realization of His purpose of love for the world.

We ought not to be surprised to discover, then, that Jesus Christ did not hesitate to expect, to call on, and to use, all the power that He needed in order to serve the ends of love. He cleanses the leper and opens the eyes of the blind, and restores to the widow her dead son. He feeds five thousand, and stills the storm with "twa words spoke suddenly." Naturalism used to explain away or ignore all these stories, on the unquestioned assumption that "miracles do not happen." Now it is pleased to accept some of the miracles of healing because—it is alleged—they can be "understood" as due to suggestion, "faith healing," or what not. It used to be said that they did not happen. Now it is said that they happened, but are unimportant because we know how they happened (in itself a temerarious claim). Meanwhile, on the not unimportant point of fact, apart from the meaning of it, it is admitted that the gospels are sometimes right.

The line between what naturalism can understand and what, because it cannot be understood, did not happen, is vague, and bewilderingly variable. And the speculations as to what facts gave rise to the more unusual miracle stories—such as that of the feeding of the five thousand—are fantastically incredible. The miracles which naturalism can understand, and those it cannot understand, are all alike woven into the gospel story so irremovably that if we reject either class they will take with them much of the teaching most characteristic of Jesus, and that the world will not willingly let die, and

leave us with no alternative but complete scepticism as to our knowledge of Him. In particular, the permanent judgment of Catholic Christianity as to His nature and His cosmic significance is rooted in the numinous impression which He made on those who came into contact with Him. And it is with the very miracles which naturalistic presuppositions reject most confidently that this numinous impression is most definitely associated. Taking them as a whole, with every qualification which may be admitted by a reasonable recognition of what the "myth-making" tendency of tradition may have added to the actual facts, the miracles of Jesus Christ show almighty power serving the interests of perfect love. But that, of course, is exactly what Jesus has taught humanity to mean by God: almighty power identified with perfect love. So that it is true to say that the gospel miracles are a revelation of God.

The miracles, then, are not evidences of Christianity, but they are an essential part of it. Miracles by themselves would not prove our religion divine, for, as Pascal points out with almost wearisome reiteration, there have been false miracles, the word, not of truth, but of error, of evil, not of righteousness. He draws attention to the miracles of the false prophets of which Jeremiah speaks, and to the signs and "lying wonders" which St. Paul expects to mark the coming of Anti-Christ. It is because of the spiritual quality of the miracles of Christ, because they are what we should expect of Him and reveal His Father, that we are impressed by them. Matthew Arnold said once, with a curious touch of Philistinism: "Suppose I could change the pen with

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which I write this into a pen-wiper, I should not thus make what I write any the truer or more convincing." But suppose One comes who calls men to an unreserved faith in a personal God of infinite love, and He takes that personality seriously, in the richest sense of the word "personality"; suppose that He lives all His life, every moment of every day, in such complete and unbroken, such sympathetic and confident intimacy with the Almighty Father that His life reveals the Father to men more fully than any words could do; suppose that signs and wonders are recorded of Him which taken as a whole reveal just that quality of divine tenderness, wise, strong, patient, indiscriminating, but inexhaustible, limitless, that is manifested in His words and in His sacrificial suffering; then would it not be foolish obtuseness—I have used the word "Philistinism"—to try to take these events out of the story of His life in obedience to some philosophy of mechanistic naturalism which is already obsolete from the point of view of physics and which was always reduced to the *reductio ad absurdum* of pretending that the human mind (it never recognized a Divine mind!) makes no real difference to actual events? That is what Pascal meant when he said: "We must judge of doctrine by miracles, and we must judge of miracles by doctrine. . . . Miracles suffice when the doctrine is not inconsistent with them, and they ought to be believed." The Resurrection reveals the same almighty love as do the Crucifixion and the Passion. His refusal to turn stones into bread for Himself, His turning of water into wine to prevent the humiliation of the hosts at the marriage feast at Cana, His feeding

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of the five thousand, are all of a piece—they reveal the awful glory of a love which is almighty in its utter unselfishness. They reveal God.

Jesus Christ worked miracles, sometimes, to strengthen the faith of those who were affected by them. He healed the paralytic man to show that He has power on earth to forgive sins, curing the body to assure the sinner that He can heal the soul. He sent the demoniac to tell his friends “how great things God had done” for him. And He rose from the dead to confirm the faith of those who loved Him: the love that wanted it to be true is met by the love that has power to prove it true. Mary Magdalene was weeping for the Risen Lord, and He appeared to her. The disciple whom He loved entered the tomb, “and he saw and believed.” St. Thomas doubted, and He showed him His hands and His side. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus “had hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel.” Now they were disillusioned. But He became known of them in the breaking of bread. St. Peter said, “I go a-fishing.” The fishing for men had proved to be only an interlude; now it was over. And Jesus came to him on the lake side.

In the light of all this, will any one say that miracles are unimportant? Whether one can believe them or not, one cannot honestly say that they are unimportant. Pascal says: “A man who declares a divine revelation cannot expect to be believed on his private authority. As a token of the communion he has with God, He raises the dead and heals the sick.” So it is with the Resurrection. Here is the Living One who was dead.

It is not an accident, or unimportant, that it was *then* that He said to His followers: "All authority is given to me in heaven and on earth." That is what they wanted to know. Was that true? They knew Him—but is the universe of that kind, is God like that, so that He actually exercises the authority that He ought to have? It was the Resurrection that convinced them. Pascal quotes St. Augustine as saying that he would not be a Christian but for the miracles, and we can understand what he meant, and sympathize with him. We can even sympathize with Pascal when he wrote: "Those who follow Jesus Christ because of His miracles honour His power in all the miracles that it produces."

Holding this conviction of the fundamental importance of miracles, it is natural that Pascal should appeal often to the Fourth Gospel, where the mighty works are consistently described as "signs." He quotes Nicodemus: "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him." More than once he refers to the Controversy of the Pharisees over the healing of the man born blind. Some said, "This man is not from God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such signs?" They said to the man who had been healed, "Give glory to God . . . as for this man, we know not whence he is." The man answered, ". . . why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened my eyes. . . . If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." Pascal said that the Jews would not have been culpable if they had not seen the miracles.

And he quotes St. John : " If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin : but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." It is hardly necessary to remark that the Fourth Gospel in this matter does but state a little more clearly the teaching of the Synoptics. St. Matthew, for example, says that He upbraided the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done because they did not repent. " If the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in Chorazin and Bethsaida they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Unless our Lord is misrepresented, then, He blamed people because they remained unrepentant in face of the miracles. As Pascal says, " It is not miracles, prophecies, etc., that make us belong to the Christian religion. This makes us indeed condemn those who do not belong to it, but it does not cause belief in those who do belong to it."

But did the miracles really happen? After all has been said, the miracles of Jesus are more important than all the rest of the alleged miracles put together—Old Testament miracles, ecclesiastical miracles, the miracles of other religions. And when we consider, dispassionately, the miracle-stories related of Christ, we must face the fact that they are contained in documents the earliest of which is separated by at least a generation from the events which they describe. There had been thirty years for the folk-mind to magnify the marvellous in this great legend of the God-Man, as it was handed on orally from one to another, among people who had not the vivid modern sense of the uniformity of Nature.

Many books have been written on that subject, and the latest of them—those of the “Form” critics—suggest that the stories of the Master were preserved by being recited in the public assemblies of the Church, where any departure from the received form of words would be noticed and checked. But of the greatest miracle of all the evidence is contemporary: contemporary with the alleged event, and contemporary with ourselves. For the main evidence of the Resurrection is the existence of the Church. Why did not the Christian movement come to an end on the first Good Friday? The followers of Jesus were, on the whole, simple peasants, suspicious of government, and inclined to be afraid of it. The government had killed their Master, and the gospel picture of their feelings immediately after the death of Christ is entirely convincing. They thought that the movement was finished. And it went on. It still goes on. They said that it went on because Jesus had convinced them that He was still alive. And no alternative explanation that has ever been offered is anything like so probable as the explanation they themselves offered. Of the Resurrection, particularly, the words of Pascal are true: Miracles are more important than you think. They served for the foundation of the Church.

Could miracles happen? Are they possible? Science, less dogmatic than at one time, is now careful to say that, on its own principles, nothing can be declared to be impossible. This is what Pascal, the scientist, meant when he said: “It is not possible to have a reasonable belief against miracles.” Science has

to consider the evidence. And the evidence for the general fact that Jesus worked miracles is very strong. He and His followers had no doubt that He performed "mighty works," "signs and wonders"; the common people did not doubt it; and his enemies—the Scribes and Pharisees and Rulers—did not doubt it. It was, indeed, a main count against Him that He broke the law by doing such things on the Sabbath.

Natural science, indeed, knows nothing of miracle; the unique always slips through its net. But there are many tremendous realities that science knows nothing about. It knows nothing of beauty—of scenery, or cathedral, or drama, or symphony. Indeed, it is not concerned with values at all, with the exception of the intellectual value, knowledge. Science can say: The anti-cyclone centred over Scotland remains unchanged. There will, probably, be no rain for the next few days. But it cannot go on to say either, Thank Heaven! or, What a pity! To do so would be to go outside the scientific field altogether.

Science knows nothing of the difference that human personality makes to the order of events, although everybody knows that there is such a difference. When a child throws its ball out of its perambulator it disturbs all the stars in their courses. Similarly, science knows nothing of the activity of the transcendent, personal Being we call God. It has no need of any such hypothesis. And it knows nothing of miracle, the unusual happening which, because it is unusual, reveals the Divine meaning implied in all activity.

Pascal clinches his argument for Christianity by a



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series of considerations which leads up to, and issues in the famous, and much controverted, wager argument. His aim all the time has been less to convince the intellect than to convert the will. Indeed, the will has much to do with the difficulties which we think are intellectual. He points out that the will turns away the mind from considering what it does not want to see; and thus the mind attends to what it likes and—in that sense—judges by what it sees. The efforts of the Christian apologist, therefore, are directed mainly to challenging men out of the indifference in which they take refuge. In Pascal's words: "I would soon have renounced pleasure," say they, "had I faith." For my part I tell you, "You would soon have faith, if you renounced pleasure."

It is both wicked and foolish to be content to be indifferent in a matter so important to all of us, and touching us so nearly, as does religion. This life lasts but a moment, and the state of death is eternal, whatever be its nature. This eternity exists, and death, which must open into it, threatens us every hour, and all our actions and thoughts must take such different directions according to the state of that eternity.

"On this point, therefore, we condemn those who live without thought of the ultimate end of life, who let themselves be guided by their own inclinations and their own pleasures without reflection and without concern, and, as if they could annihilate eternity by turning away their thoughts from it, think only of making themselves happy for the moment. . . . This resting in ignorance is a monstrous thing, and they who pass their life in it must be made to feel its extravagance and stupidity."

To live as though there were no God and no eternity

might be natural wisdom, if you could be sure that there is—nothing. But you cannot be sure, and the importance of the issue is so great that if you cannot be sure, then you are compelled not to be indifferent. Apart from revelation, speaking according to natural lights, our ignorance of the existence and nature of God is complete. By faith we know His existence, and in glory we shall know His nature. Man cannot know the nature of God, and reason cannot give a conclusive answer to the question, is there a God? God is, or He is not. To which side shall we incline? “A game is being played at an infinite distance away, at which heads or tails will turn up. What will you wager?”

The modern Christian mind, particularly the modern Anglo-Saxon mind, is shocked at the notion of “tossing up” to decide whether one shall believe that there is, or is not, a God. It seems like the intrusion, not only of the frivolous, but even of the spiritually dangerous and the socially evil, into the most sacred sphere of human life. But Pascal was no libertine; there is no least suggestion that in the most worldly period of his life he was a gambler. He was a philosopher whose mind was largely formed by mathematics and physics. He is talking of the theory of probability, and it is only that he may state the case for the unmathematical as well as for the mathematician that he says, what will you wager? We must not find a stumbling-block in a form of words when the man and the mind that use them are entirely serious.

God is, then, or He is not. Which statement do you accept? “According to reason you can do neither the

one nor the other . . . you can defend neither of the propositions." Do not blame those who have made a choice, however; you know nothing of whether they have chosen right or wrong. But even though I cannot blame them for the choice they have made—my ignorance prevents me from saying that it is wrong—I blame them for making a choice at all. He who chooses heads and he who chooses tails are both in the wrong. The true course is not to wager.

Yes; but you must wager in this matter. Live with God and for God, or live without God. You must choose one or the other. You have no option, for to refuse to choose is itself a choice. You are either a believer or not a believer. You must call head or tail. Which will you choose? "You have two things to lose: the true and the good; and two things to stake: your reason and your will, your knowledge and your happiness; and your nature has two things to shun: error and misery." We may leave reason and knowledge out of consideration since, *ex hypothesi*, we can have no intellectual assurance in this field. But what of happiness? You are certainly risking that in this wager. Suppose you decide that there is a God, and act accordingly. If you are right, you gain eternal blessedness; if you are wrong, you lose—nothing. For if there is no God, then there is no eternal blessedness for you or any one else, whatever your belief or unbelief may be. Wager, then, without hesitation, that He is.

But what if I am risking too much? Since I cannot avoid wagering, what are the odds? On one side, I give

up the pleasures and satisfactions of this life. Would it be worth it if I stood to gain two lives after death? Or three? Surely, I should do right to risk one life against three, if there is an equal chance of gain or loss? Remember, I cannot refuse to play. It is only a question of which side I choose—faith or unbelief. But there are not three lives in the balance against this life; there is an eternity of life and happiness against this life, which may end to-morrow. (Pascal was all his life a sick man, in actual pain, and he died before he was forty.) “And wherever the infinite is and there is not an infinity of chances of loss against that of gain, there is not time to hesitate; you must give all.” “And it is no use to say it is uncertain if we will gain, and it is certain that we risk . . . every player stakes a certainty against an uncertainty, and he stakes a finite certainty to gain a finite uncertainty, without transgressing against reason.”

It is reasonable, then, to believe—and Pascal’s argument is logically more convincing than the summary of it here given, but only to the mathematically minded, to whom, presumably, he was making his main appeal. But what if our mind be convinced that it is more reasonable to believe than not to believe; if you see that you must choose one or the other; and if you are so made that you cannot believe? What, then, would Pascal have you do? You have at least learned your inability to believe—since it has been shown you that belief is rational, and you cannot believe.

“Endeavour then to convince yourself, not by increase of proofs of God, but by the abatement of your passions. You

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would like to attain faith, and do not know the way ; you would like to cure yourself of unbelief, and do not know the remedy for it. Learn of those who have been bound like you, and who now stake all their possessions. . . . Follow the way by which they began ; by acting as if they believed, taking the holy water, having masses said," etc.

What will they gain ? They will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, generous, sincere friends, truthful. And what will they have to sacrifice but glory and luxury ? They will gain in this life, and at each step they take on the road they will see so great certainty of gain, so much nothingness in what they risk, that they will at last recognize that they have wagered for something certain and infinite, for which they have given nothing.

There is no doubt that this wager argument, if taken by itself, would leave an impression of a somewhat cold-blooded utilitarianism—a balancing of what is to be gained, and what has to be paid for it, in being a Christian believer. We cannot take it by itself, however. " Know that it is made by a man who has knelt, both before and after it, in prayer to that Being, infinite and without parts, before whom he lays all that he has, for you also to lay before Him all you have for your own good and for His glory, that so strength may be given to lowliness." It is the work of a man whose heart was set on God, whose soul longed for Him as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, who hungered and thirsted for righteousness. To him Christianity was life, the only life worth living ; outside it was mere existence. It was an experience of incomparable blessedness, and he wanted others to be partakers with him of its supreme

joy, the joy of deliverance from sin. Beside that, all that a man gave up to be a Christian—even of the somewhat austere kind that Port Royal exemplified—was nothing at all. It is the pearl of great price, for which a man will gladly sell all that he has. And he knew what he was talking about. He had been a rich man, and he had given it all up—carriage and horses, splendid furniture, fine silver, works of art, even his books—he had sold all that he had and given it to the poor. He was a genius, a philosopher and a stylist. But what will attract men to Pascal as long as time lasts is his transparent sincerity. This is how he describes himself; the description rings true, and was true.

“I love poverty because He loved it. I love riches because they afford me the means of helping the very poor. I keep faith with everybody; I do not render evil to those who wrong me, but I wish them a lot like mine, in which I receive neither evil nor good from men. I try to be just, true, sincere and faithful to all men; I have a tender heart for those to whom God has more closely united me; and whether I am alone, or seen of men, I do all my actions in the sight of God, who must judge of them, and to whom I have consecrated them all. These are my sentiments; and every day of my life I bless my Redeemer, who has implanted them in me, and who, of a man full of weakness, of miseries, of lust, and pride, and of ambition, has made a man free from all those evils by the power of His grace, to which all the glory of it is due, as of myself I have only misery and error.”

When at last it was clear that Pascal was dying, his sister yielded to his request that M. Beurrier, a priest, might be brought to him. The priest carried the Blessed Sacrament to him, and as he came in he said, “Behold the Holy One Whom you have desired.”

Pascal gathered his strength, and responded to the priest: "Yes, sir, all that I believe with my whole heart." He received the last sacraments with tears, and said, "May God never leave me," and so died. Among his *Pensées* these words occur: "By His grace, I await death in peace, in the hope of being eternally united to Him. Yet I live with Joy, whether in the prosperity which it pleases Him to bestow upon me, or in the adversity which He sends for my good, and which He has taught me to bear by His example." That is what it means to be reconciled to God through Christ.

## NEWMAN

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN was the son of a London banker. He may have had Jewish blood in his veins, and as a child he may have played with Disraeli, who was three years younger than himself. He may have learned his ideas of right and wrong more from Shakespeare than from the Bible. The story of his life, indeed, is surrounded with speculation as to what he may have thought and may have done. This is partly due to the fact that many men, of different creeds and nationalities, have taken in hand to write his biography and explain his influence. Still more is it due to the worship, only this side of idolatry, with which men have regarded Newman since the days, now a hundred years ago, when in Oxford they used to say : "Credo in Newmannum." There has been a Newman legend for at least a century, and the charm of Newman still makes Rome a living option for sensitive minds and, what is more important, wins to a supernatural and otherworldly faith many who would never dream of becoming Roman Catholics.

It was probably not unimportant, for the development of Newman's character and life, that he was the eldest child in the family. "The eldest son differs from the others," says A. A. Brill, in his *Fundamental Conceptions of Psycho-analysis*, "because his position in his environ-



ment was such that he had to develop certain characteristic traits . . . as this goes on there is the tendency for the oldest son of the family to assume leadership." Not only in his relations with his family, but in his capacity for and acceptance of the leader's function, Newman was always the "eldest son." It has been noticed that he was never really comfortable except in association with men younger than himself.

The Newmans were Evangelicals. It is far from being true that religion was kept alive in the Church of England by those who were proud to be called by that name. The best of their leaders, indeed, were men of piety and enthusiasm, of whom any Church might be proud. They preached the Atonement, founded Sunday Schools, and produced some first-rate hymns. It is not the whole truth to say that their religion was merely individualistic, for they founded the Church Missionary Society, inspired and supported Wilberforce in his campaign for the emancipation of the slaves, and Lord Shaftesbury in his social work in England. But their doctrine of the Church was so defective that when the Erastian attack came in the Reform period, they did not know what to defend or how to defend it. The theology of the Evangelicals was too jejune and inadequate to be the basis of a system of morals. It is significant that although Newman was brought up to take great delight in reading the Bible, and although he knew the Catechism perfectly, he received no definite religious convictions from his parents or his home.

It is a curious fact that a large number of those who have gone from the English Church to Rome came from

Evangelical or "Low Church" homes. Newman came from that environment, so did Manning, and George Tyrrell, and Ronald Knox, and G. K. Chesterton. The men who, in the dark days, in the 'forties and 'fifties of last century, stood fast and remained loyal to the English Church, and did not lose faith in her, were, on the whole, the sons of High Churchmen. Sir J. T. Coleridge says of Mr. Keble, for example: "He had grown up in the High Church School, and, as a High Churchman naturally will do, he looked upwards through the Reformation to the Primitive and the Undivided Church; he loved his own Church as, on the whole, a faithful representative of that Church." Dr. Pusey was brought up by his father to distrust the excesses of the Evangelical Movement; and he learned the doctrine of the Real Presence from his mother's explanation of the Catechism. "All that I know about religious truth," he used to say, "I learnt, at least in principle, from my dear mother. But then" (he would add) "behind my mother—though, of course, I did not know it at the time—was the Catholic Church."

These things are not accidental. When it is analysed, Protestantism always reveals itself as a religion of which man is the inspiration and centre. Man's salvation, rather than the will of God, is the goal at which it aims. "Faith" or "religion" is what it is interested in, the means by which its goal is obtained, rather than the grace of God, forgiving, purifying, giving strength to do His will. Protestantism teaches men to look within. So, when a man has been brought up to believe that the Church of England is a Protestant body, and then feels

the need, as most men do, of God's supernatural help to do His will and to live for Him—if he discovers that Catholicism offers just that help in its sacramental system, it is not to be wondered at if he becomes dominated by the imposing claims and great achievements of the Roman Church, and yields himself to them.

It is an important fact that Newman was born in 1801, under the shadow of the French Revolution. As Dr. John Oman has justly put it, that event has proved the watershed of nineteenth-century thinking. Those who were old enough to know the conditions against which it was a revolt, sympathized with it in spite of its excesses. They were the forerunners of that liberalism which has looked back to the French Revolution as a new dawn for the happiness of mankind, the birthday of the idealism which has inspired all that is best and freest in modern Europe. But nearly all those who were born at the beginning of the century, as Newman was, saw the Revolution as an outcrop of hell, anarchy nurtured by excess of liberty. Newman hated the whole spirit of the movement, so much so that he refused even to look at the tricolour. And his opposition to liberalism, the offspring of the revolution, was the most consistent motive of his life.

The influence of the French Revolution came into Newman's life and thinking, to some extent at least, through Wordsworth. He read the poet with his friend Mr. Bowden, when they were undergraduates together at Trinity, and many years afterwards he wrote of the "high principles and feelings" to which Wordsworth "addressed himself." Wordsworth's somewhat facile

belief in the goodness of common men led him to expect an easy victory for the principles of the Revolution, a victory which would bring unmixed blessing to all classes. Good was sure to triumph because it was good, and in a little time poverty would

Be found no more, that we should see the earth  
Unthwarted in her wish to recompense  
The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil,  
All institutes for ever blotted out  
That legalised exclusion, empty pomp  
Abolished, sensual state and cruel power,  
Whether by edict of the one or few ;  
And finally, as sum and crown of all,  
Should see the people having a strong hand  
In framing their own laws ; whence better days  
To all mankind.

But he was soon disillusioned. The Revolution as it actually worked itself out poisoned his view of human nature. He had looked for goodwill and, behold, massacres ; he had expected democracy to take the place of the rule "of the one or few," and what came was Napoleon. The spiritual tragedy of Wordsworth is in this contrast ; he wrote of the beginnings of the Revolution in the well-known words,

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven !

And he lived to deplore the Reform Bill and to doubt whether popular education will not do more harm than good. He is the Lost Leader of Browning's poem.

The French Revolution, which had so great an effect on Newman, was but the expression in action of the Romantic revival in Western Europe ; and this is true

in spite of the fact that many critics have seen the Oxford Movement as a real part of the Romantic revival, although the Oxford fathers hated the Revolution. We can say that the Romantic movement issued in and recoiled from the Revolution.

What was the Romantic revival? Into the eighteenth century, the age of common sense, of urbane conventionality, of rules from which all life had fled, there had come, from Italy probably, but certainly through Rousseau, a breath of freedom, a new genuine love of nature, an uncritical belief in man and interest in his history. Men began to love and admire Gothic churches and to take interest in the more picturesque side of the Middle Ages. The simplicities of nature, and not books about what townsmen thought nature ought to be; the fantastic and the supernatural; man as he is when unspoiled by education and the conventions of "good society"; these were the battle cries of the revival.

The second half of the century is marked by a great renewal and revolt and reinforcement, a thawing, as it were of dawn or a new spring, of the spirit of man. Through the prosaic religion, the dull poetry, the abstract morality, the unhistorical thinking, the utilitarian philosophy, the artificial art, and the complacent living, there began to flow the stream of a more natural life. The arid rationalism of an age when individualism was easy because it was superficial and false gave place to the recognition of the significance of *life*, in nature and in man. We see the change that took place if we compare Pope with Wordsworth, or the Deists with Wesley or Blake or Keble.

The nineteenth century, as distinguished from the eighteenth, had a keen interest in the past of humanity, an historic sense, an historic imagination. That is one reason why the seed of the Oxford Movement fell on prepared soil. The mind of the English people had been turned to history by the popularity of the writings of Scott. More than any other single influence it was Sir Walter Scott who awakened popular interest in these islands in the many-coloured variety of the past. His novels and poems taught men and women to love chivalry and tradition and did much to prepare the public mind for the conscious mediaevalism of the Catholic Revival.

Newman always had a devotion to Walter Scott. As a boy, in the early summer mornings, he read *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering* in bed when they first came out, before it was time to get up ; and long before that, when he was eight years old, he listened eagerly to the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* which his mother and aunt were reading aloud. In an essay on Aristotle's *Poetics* which he published in 1828 he showed a detailed acquaintance with the novels—*Kenilworth*, *Ivanhoe*, and *Old Mortality*,—sums up his judgment of Scott as a man by saying that his “centre is chivalrous honour,” and dismisses his poetry with the assertion that his versification is “slovenly.” Later on, in 1839, he defined with some care the part which Scott had played in relation to the Oxford Movement.

“The general need,” Newman said, “of something deeper and more attractive, than what had offered itself elsewhere, may be considered to have led to his popularity ; and by means

of his popularity he re-acted on his readers, stimulating their mental thirst, feeding their hopes, setting before them visions which, when once seen, are not easily forgotten, and silently indoctrinating them with nobler ideas, which might afterwards be appealed to as first principles."

Newman and his friends were attracted by the spirit of chivalrous honour in the writings of Scott, the instinctive dislike of democracy and his eager Toryism; and they were convinced that the improvement in public feeling after 1833, so far as Erastian attacks on the Church were concerned, was largely due to Scott's influence. And not only his friends and those of the Movement, but also their enemies, saw the spirit of Scott in the Catholic revival. Borrow's *Romany Rye* was published in 1854. In the appendix to the sixth chapter the author wrote :

"The Popery which has overflowed the land during the last fourteen or fifteen years has come immediately from Oxford. . . . Popish and Jacobite nonsense, and little or nothing else, having been taught at Oxford for about that number of years. But whence did the pedants get the Popish nonsense with which they corrupted youth? Why, from the same quarter from which they got the Jacobite nonsense with which they have inoculated those lads who were not inoculated with it before—Scott's novels.

"Jacobitism and Laudism, a kind of half-Popery, had at one time been very prevalent at Oxford, but both were dead and buried there, as everywhere else, till Scott called them out of their graves, when the pedants of Oxford hailed both—ay, and the Pope too, as soon as Scott had made the old fellow fascinating, through particular novels, more especially *The Monastery* and *The Abbot*. Then the quiet, respectable, honourable Church of England would no longer do for the pedants of Oxford; they must belong to a more genteel Church—they were ashamed at first to be downright Romans,

so they would be Lauds. The pale-looking, but exceedingly genteel, non-juring clergyman in *Waverley* was a Laud; but they soon became tired of being Lauds, for Laud's Church, gew-gawish and idolatrous as it was, was not sufficiently tinselly and idolatrous for them, so they must be Popes, but in a sneaking way, still calling themselves Church of England men, in order to batten on the bounty of the Church which they were betraying."

It is true that the attitude of mind produced by reading Scott's novels tends to make a man sympathetic to Catholicism. The reality of the spiritual world, the value of tradition, and the greatness of the Christian civilization of the Middle Ages, were what the ordinary Englishman learned from "the Master of Romance."

A third important literary influence on Newman's thinking, at least as great as those of Wordsworth and Scott, was that of Coleridge. German idealism, as both a moral and intellectual revolt against the thought of the previous age, was discovered and interpreted for English thinkers by Coleridge. He did for one generation what Carlyle did for the next. Both the idealism and interest in history of the Catholic revival in England found a forerunner in Coleridge. Newman, in the Chronological Notes for 1835, writes: "During this spring I for the first time read parts of Coleridge's works; and I am surprised how much I thought mine is to be found there."

The influence of Coleridge, in his own day and since then, cannot be measured entirely by his books, for it was wielded chiefly in his conversation. He was one of the world's greatest talkers. Notwithstanding Carlyle's spiteful detraction, and Max Beerbohm's wicked



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drawing, his talk had a very great influence on the more brilliant of his younger contemporaries, and his *Table Talk* is still read by those who are attracted by great thinking greatly expressed. Coleridge's conversation, more than any other single influence, produced the reaction from Bentham without which the teaching of the Oxford Movement could hardly have taken root. And Newman's interest in development, his life-long sense that the material is less real than the mental, and his fancy that "perhaps thought is music," all show his affinity with the characteristic thoughts of Coleridge.

Newman's theology was predominantly historical. Coleridge was, all his life, interested in theology, and his theological thinking marks him as a predecessor of the Catholic revival. From the death of Butler, and through all the Evangelical revival, English theology had been suffering from a poverty of intellectual interest. Coleridge stimulated that interest and asserted the rights of the intellect in religion as against those of the emotions. His work can be described, negatively, by saying that he broke down a good deal of Protestant prejudice on the Church, the Bible, and the Sacraments. Positively, we may say that Coleridge was interested in the subjects and the writers which afterwards interested the Tractarians. Lamb lent him volumes of Aquinas! And he read, and wrote full comments on, Hooker and Donne, Andrewes and Jeremy Taylor, Bull and Waterland, in which, it is safe to say, he was almost unique in his generation.

Coleridge emphasized the unfamiliar truths that the Christian Church is a visible militant society, and that

Christianity without a Church exercising spiritual authority is a vanity and delusion. He condemned the pretended right of every individual, competent or incompetent, to interpret Scripture in a sense of his own, in opposition to the judgment of the Church ; and whereas the typical Anglican of his day gave the Church no place at all as an authority beside the Scriptures, Coleridge taught the co-ordinate authority of Scripture, the Spirit, and the Church. His belief on the Sacraments was patently "higher" than was usual in his time. He held that Baptism is the *initium* of that regeneration of which the whole spiritual life of the Christian is the complete process, and that in the Eucharist the true Body and Blood of Christ are present and are taken by faithful communicants.

That he had no understanding of the Sacrament of Penance, or of Catholic teaching about the life after death, or that he underestimated Laud and over-praised Luther, is a proof that he is not a part of that Catholic revival of which an outsider like Carlyle declared that he was a forerunner. He had been a Unitarian, and all his life was feeling his way more and more towards Catholic truth.

Newman wrote to Hurrell Froude, in 1836, of Coleridge "looking at the Church, the Sacraments, doctrines, etc., rather as symbols of a philosophy than as *truths*—as the mere accidental types of principles." Coleridge would almost certainly have repudiated that description of his position, but it is extraordinarily acute, and recognizes a tendency in nineteenth-century idealism which was not generally perceived until the end of the

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century. There were, indeed, elements in Coleridge's thinking which have had great influence, but with which Newman had little sympathy. Although he became, in political philosophy, the heir of Burke, there was a time when, like Wordsworth, he opened his mind to the ideas and aspirations which had made the French Revolution. He was old enough to understand, and to hate, the state of things which explained, if it did not justify, the worst excesses of the Terror. There was, therefore, a persistent Liberal element in his philosophy, and his letters mark the beginnings of Biblical criticism in England. It is only fair to say, however, that he is always positive, never merely negative, in his criticism. He examines the "earthen vessel" only in order that he may the better distinguish and understand the "heavenly treasure" that it contains. He is the forerunner of *Lux Mundi* and *Essays Catholic and Critical* rather than of *Essays and Reviews* and the *Modern Churchman*. Newman summed up Coleridge's achievement in religious philosophy in the *British Critic* in 1839. "While he indulged a liberty of speculation which no Christian can tolerate . . . he made trial of his age, and found it respond to him, and succeeded in interesting its genius in the cause of Catholic truth." It is a curious illustration of the fallibility of human memory that in his old age Newman declared that he had not read Coleridge in his Oxford days!

The importance of the fact that Newman was born in 1801 was, in part at least, that he was influenced by Wordsworth, Scott, and Coleridge. It matters comparatively little whether or not he read these writers,

for their ideas were "in the air"; they were part of the spiritual atmosphere in which Newman grew up. These were what he shared with others, but the interests which were peculiarly his own during his youth and early manhood were of an unexpectedly different kind.

Newman's mind was naturally sceptical, critical, negative. "I thank God," he wrote to Dr. Pusey in 1845, "that He has shielded me morally from what intellectually might so easily come to me—general scepticism." And R. H. Hutton referred to his life as having "measured the whole length and breadth and depth of human doubt without fascination and without dread." His strong appeal as an apologist for the Faith is just that he feels in his very bones, as it were, the strength of the difficulties to which he replies. It has been said—and it must be repeated because an opposite impression is widespread—"In Newman, frankness amounted to genius."

All this appears when he was a schoolboy at Ealing. Like Tyrrell many years later, he confessed that he found it difficult to realize what it means to love God. At fourteen he read Tom Paine on the Old Testament, and that this was no passing whim is clear from the fact that when he was one of the public tutors at Oriel his admiring pupils held it as a mark of his strength of mind that he owned a copy of Paine's *Rights of Man*; but he kept it locked up, and only lent it to those who could be trusted to come to no harm by reading it.

Hume also he read while still at school, and his mind came back to him again and again: naturally so, perhaps, for the Christian, and the Christian teacher in particular,

wants to "know the worst," and if a man can hold the faith unshaken after a fearless and understanding examination of the objections that Hume brings, then he need not fear what man can do unto him. Almost the first book which Newman wrote was his *Essays on Ecclesiastical Miracles*, and there he deals with Hume's arguments. He returns to the subject again in the Oxford University Sermons, and he restates his reply to Hume in the book of his old age, *The Grammar of Assent*. He grants Hume's argument that it is more probable that witnesses should deceive than that the laws of nature should be suspended—unless we agree that it is antecedently probable that God will reveal Himself to mankind. He suggests, however, that like unbelievers in general, Hume does not decide according to the evidence but first makes up his mind and then, from the point of view of that *prejudice*, merely occupies himself in sifting the evidence.

Newman argues, in reply to Hume, that the New Testament miracles are congruous with the revealed character of God :

"that great effects, otherwise unaccountable, in the event followed upon the acts said to be miraculous . . . that the reception of them as true has left its mark upon the world as no other event ever did ; that, viewed in their effects, they have—that is, the belief of them has—served to raise human nature to a high moral standard, otherwise unattainable ; these and the like considerations are parts of a great complex argument, which so far can be put into propositions, but which, even between, and around, and behind these, still is implicit and secret, and cannot by any ingenuity be imprisoned in a formula, and packed into a nutshell. . . . It must be no smart antithesis which may look well on paper, but the living

action of the mind on a great problem of fact ; and we must summon to our aid all our powers and resources, if we would encounter it worthily and not as if it were a literary essay."

At the end of his first year at Oxford he was reading Locke, the main philosophical source, at least in England, of that Liberalism which Newman, all his life, looked on as the enemy. He was seventeen years old when he first read Locke, and at that most impressionable age he was attracted by his manly simplicity of mind and outspoken candour. His criticism of Locke, nevertheless, to which he returns again and again in his writings, is one of the most characteristic things in Newman's writings.

Locke maintained, against orthodox Christianity, the doctrine which was revived by Huxley and others in the last third of the nineteenth century, that we ought not to maintain any proposition with greater assurance than the proof will warrant. Newman replies to this that faith, though an intellectual action, is ethical in its origin, and that the reasons for believing are for the most part implicit and need be but slightly recognized by the mind that is under their influence ; that they consist, moreover, rather of presumptions and ventures after the truth than of accurate and complete proofs ; and that probable arguments under the scrutiny and sanction of a prudent judgment, are sufficient for conclusions which we even embrace as most certain, and turn to the most important uses.

A philosophy like Locke's, he says, cuts off from the possibility and privilege of faith all but the educated few, all but the learned, the clear-headed, the men of practised

intellects and balanced minds, men who had leisure, who had opportunities of consulting others, and kind and wise friends to whom they deferred. Christianity allows and encourages philosophical exercises, indeed, but does not impose them on the individual.

Faith does not demand evidences so strong as are necessary for what is commonly considered a rational conviction, because it is mainly swayed by antecedent considerations. The mind that believes is acted upon by its own hopes, fears, and existing opinions. It is almost a proverb that persons believe what they wish to be true. If great desire of an object sometimes makes us incredulous that we have obtained it, that is only when we consider its attainment improbable, as well as desirable. Men readily believe reports unfavourable to persons they dislike, or confirmations of theories of their own.

Newman states at once the criticism of this position which leaps to the mind. When the probabilities we assume do not really exist, or our wishes are inordinate, or our opinions are wrong, our faith degenerates into weakness, extravagance, superstition, enthusiasm, bigotry, prejudice, as the case may be ; but when our prepossessions are unexceptionable, then we are right in believing or not believing, not indeed without, but upon slender evidence. He quotes in support of his view the famous definition of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews : " Faith is the substance " or realizing " of things hoped for." It is the reckoning that to be which it hopes or wishes to be ; not " the realizing of things proved by evidence." Its desire is its main evidence ; or, as the Apostle

expressly goes on to say, it makes its own evidence, "being the *evidence* of things not seen."

Faith is a moral principle. It is created in the mind, not so much by facts as by probabilities; and since probabilities have no definite ascertained value, and are reducible to no scientific standard, what are such to each individual, depends on his moral temperament. A good and a bad man will think very different things probable. In the judgment of a rightly disposed mind, objects are desirable and attainable which irreligious men will consider to be but fancies. But a man is responsible for his faith, because he is responsible for his likings and dislikings, his hopes and opinions, on all of which his faith depends. So that which justifies and is acceptable in God's sight, lives in, and from, a desire after those things which it accepts and confesses.

If the laws of evidence were the sole arbiters of Faith, of course Faith could have nothing supernatural in it. But love of the great Object of Faith, watchful attention to Him, readiness to believe Him near, easiness to believe Him interposing in human affairs, fear of the risk of slighting or missing what may really come from Him; these are feelings, not natural to fallen man, and they come only of supernatural grace: and these are the feelings which make us think evidence sufficient, which falls far short of a proof in itself.

To Locke's notion that it is not only illogical but also immoral to be more assured of the truth of a statement than the evidence warrants, Newman answers that that is a theoretical view of the mind. It shows what Locke thinks men ought to think, but it forgets how he himself



and other men actually do think. There are many truths in concrete matters, Newman says, which no one can demonstrate, yet every one unconditionally accepts. He appeals to psychology. He is content with the mind as God made it, while Locke, he says, consults his own ideal of how the mind ought to act. Not only does religious faith go beyond the evidence, but so also do many other kinds of certainty. "We are sure beyond all hazard of a mistake, that our own self is not the only being existing; that there is an external world; that it is a system with parts and a whole, a universe carried on by laws; and that the future is affected by the past." He clinches the argument with the confident declaration that assent on reasonings not demonstrative is too widely recognized an act to be irrational, unless man's nature is irrational, too familiar to the prudent and clear-minded to be an infirmity or an extravagance.

In the long vacation of 1818 Newman fell in love with Gibbon, and he re-read him in the following year "with mounting admiration." His ears rang with the cadence of his sentences, and he dreamed of it for a night or two. He began to make an analysis of Thucydides in Gibbon's style and, nearly forty years later, he confessed that he seemed to trace Gibbon's "vigorous condensation and peculiar rhythm" at every turn in the literature of that time. He said that Gibbon was the only English writer who had any claim to be considered an ecclesiastical historian.

In a recent study of Newman it was said that the harshest condemnation of Gibbon that he ever permitted himself was to write of his *Five Causes of Christianity* :

"We do not deny them, but only say they are not sufficient." But this is criminally far from being an adequate account of the facts. In a very great sermon on the Contest between Faith and Sight, preached in 1832, he said of Gibbon :

"For his great abilities and, on the other hand, his cold heart, impure mind, and scoffing spirit, he may justly be accounted as, in this country at least, one of the masters of a new school of error, which seems not yet to have accomplished its destinies, and is framed more exactly after the received type of the author of evil, than the other chief anti-Christians who have, in these last times, occupied the scene of the world."

In the *Grammar of Assent*, Newman replies to Gibbon after a lifetime's respectful study of him. He says that his account of the rise of Christianity is the mere subjective view of one who could not enter into its depth and power. He had attempted to explain the rise and establishment of Christianity by the combination of five purely natural causes—zeal, the doctrine of a future state, the claim to miraculous power, the virtues of Christians, and their ecclesiastical organization. But he had not thought of accounting for this combination. The wonder is, what made these causes come together? And not only so, but he had not produced evidence that these causes did produce the effect which he attributed to them, the conversion of bodies of men to Christianity. In particular, Gibbon himself found what he believed to be Christian morality "gloomy and austere," and the heathen had no better opinion of it. The remarkable thing is that a man of his sagacity did not enquire what explanation the Christian teachers gave of their own

success: repentance towards God, faith in Christ, charity. "No," says Newman. "Such thoughts are close upon him, and close upon the truth; but he cannot sympathize with them, he cannot believe in them, he cannot even enter into them, *because* he needs the due formation for such an exercise of mind."

It was this speculative habit of mind, finding interest, unusual in one so young, in Coleridge and Hume and Locke and Gibbon, which led him to think that the natural world may be a deception, and to a mistrust of material phenomena. The spirit was ready—empty, swept, and garnished—for the Spirit to claim its throne, if the opportunity appeared. He was in the habit of disputing about religion with one of the masters at Ealing, "an excellent man, the Rev. Walter Mayor, of Pembroke College, Oxford." From him he received deep religious impressions which were, for him, the beginning of a new life. These, by God's grace, were never afterwards effaced or obscured. To the end of his long life the Cardinal always looked back to this change as his conversion to God. It was the beginning of divine faith in him, and from that time onward he rested in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, "myself and my Creator."

It is characteristic of Newman that he records scrupulously his debt to Mr. Mayor. There is a quaint page in the *Apologia* in which he recalls that he learned the doctrine of a visible, supernatural Church from Mr. Whately, Fellow of Oriel and afterwards Archbishop of Dublin; from Dr. Hawkins, afterwards Provost of Oriel, he learned to discard the Calvinistic idea that it is possible

here and now in this world to separate the lost from the saved. And from Mr. James he learned the great doctrine of the Apostolical Succession. His mind was naturally dependent, his nature was strongly affectionate, and gratitude was a real element in his relation to his fellows. To understand Newman we must remember, even more than his sensitive mind, his warm and loving heart. It is that which supplies the key to his life and all its changes.

One illustration of his affectionate nature which became prominent when he first went to Oxford, and lasted the rest of his life, is the enormous number of letters which he wrote. He had a genius for correspondence, and three volumes of his letters have been published. "It has ever been a hobby of mine," he wrote when he was over sixty, "that the true life of a man is in his letters." And that is certainly true of his own life.

"It may be observed," says one editor, "that his letters are instinct with the consciousness of the person that he addresses. There is a distinct tone to each of his familiar correspondents. Intimate as his letters are, there is a separate tone of intimacy, as there would be in conversing with friends . . . as a rule, every circumstance of person and surrounding is present with him—all the traits that distinguish one from another. To all he is open, candid, confiding; but there is distinction in his confidence."

It is a particularly moving experience to read his letters to his family. A much loved sister, Mary, died during his first years at Oxford, and for months afterwards she is in their thoughts; he writes about her; and the thought of her, on many different occasions,

brings tears to his eyes. Fifty-four years after Mary's death he wrote, on the anniversary, that often he could not think of her without tears. And there is a most touching letter to a servant girl who has lost her sister : "God will bless and keep you in His own good way. We never can trust Him too much. All things turn to good to them who trust Him. I too know what it is to lose a sister. I lost her forty-nine years ago, and, though so many years have passed, I still feel the pain."

His time at Oxford was a time of great friendships. The day after Newman went into residence, for example, Bowden called on him. They became intimate friends at once, and remained so for twenty-seven years, until Bowden's death. Men used to mistake their names, and call them by each other's. It is almost incredible that when Bowden married he used to make a similar mistake, and call Newman Elizabeth and his wife Newman ! Froude, Keble, Pusey : Father Tristram has said that friendships of such an intense nature as those developed in the stress of the Oxford Movement were a novel feature in the life of the University. And he has recalled how, when Newman was made an honorary Fellow of Trinity in 1877, he went to see his old tutor, the Reverend Thomas Short—more than ninety years of age, blind, dying. The dying man recognized the foot-step he had not heard for more than thirty years, and cried : "What—*dear* Newman ? I'm delighted to—— No ! I can't say to see you." It is incidents like that which give content to the statement of Frederic Rogers that Newman was "revered as few men are revered"

by "those who have ever been honoured by (his) friendship."

The great friend of Newman's life was Ambrose St. John, a younger man, a disciple of the Oxford days, who preceded Newman by a short time in making his submission to Rome, who lived with him at Oscott, and accompanied him on his first visit to Rome. The Romans called Ambrose St. John "Newman's angel guardian." He joined the Oratory when Newman founded it in England, and lived with him and cared for him until the companionship was ended by death. "So far as this world was concerned," Newman wrote, "I was his first and last." It has been said that the utter misery of the expression on Newman's face at the Requiem Mass for St. John remains still an unforgettable memory in the minds of those who were present. He insisted on giving the absolutions himself. In the second prayer he broke down so completely that he had to begin it again. A second time he had to stop, and stood silent, the tears streaming down his cheeks, while the whole great congregation wept aloud. Many years after, Newman was buried in the same grave as Ambrose St. John.

In the closing passage of the *Apologia*, one of the supreme examples of perfect English prose, Newman paid his tribute to Ambrose St. John and all his friends. He dedicates the book to his brothers of the Birmingham Oratory,

"who have been so faithful to me ; who have been so sensitive of my needs ; who have been so indulgent of my failings ; who have carried me through so many trials ; who have been so cheerful under discouragements of my causing ; who have

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done so many good works, and let me have the credit of them—with whom I have lived so long, with whom I hope to die.

“And to you especially, dear Ambrose St. John; whom God gave me, when He took every one else away; who are the link between my old life and my new; who have now for twenty-one years been so devoted to me, so patient, so zealous, so tender; who have let me lean so hard upon you; who have watched me so narrowly; who have never thought of yourself, if I was in question.

“And in you I gather up and bear in memory those familiar affectionate companions and counsellors, who in Oxford were given to me, one after another, to be my daily solace and relief; and all those others, of great name and high example, who were my thorough friends, and showed me true attachment in times long past; and also those many younger men, whether I knew them or not, who have never been disloyal to me in word or deed; and of all these, thus various in their relations to me, those more especially who have since joined the Catholic Church.

“And I earnestly pray for this whole company, with a hope against hope, that all of us, who once were so united, and so happy in our union, may even now be brought at length, by the Power of the Divine Will, into One Fold and under One Shepherd.”

That is great writing. It justifies the comment of Dr. George Copeland:

“The writing of Newman, like that of Shakespeare, will admit of neither paraphrase nor translation, and those who cannot read it in the true original had better not read it at all. I mean by the *true original* not only the English language, established in these realms, but that pure and reformed branch of it, to which Newman and nobody else belongs.”

Not only so, but Father Tristram is certainly right when he says that this passage shows “whence it came, that the writer of it occupied a place apart in the thoughts

and affections of those whose lives were intertwined with his." He had a genius for affection.

Many examples of this might be given. When Mrs. Pusey died, Pusey wrote to Keble: "God sent Newman to me . . . in the first hour of my sorrow; and it was like the visit of an angel." How he loved Oxford! That beloved place—wood, water, stone, all so calm! "It is the shrine of our best affections, the bosom of our fondest recollections, a spell upon our after-life, a stay for world-weary mind and soul, wherever we are cast, till the end comes." It is no wonder that when he preached his last Anglican sermon, with the significant title—"The Parting of Friends"—men noted "the faltering voice, the long pauses, the perceptible and hardly successful efforts at restraining himself" on Newman's part. Pusey sobbed aloud in the church.

What can we more say? When he came back from Rome, a Cardinal, a great congregation gathered in the church of the Birmingham Oratory to thank God for his safe return. His address began: "It is such a happiness to get home." In his eighty-fifth year he wrote: "How good has God been to me in giving me such kind friends! It has been so all through my life. They have spared my mistakes, overlooked my defects, and found excuses for my faults." In the early years at the Oratory there was a very bad outbreak of fever at Bilston, and the local priest was overwhelmed by the work of ministering to the sick and dying. Newman and another father went to his help. Soon after the epidemic had abated, and they were back at the Oratory, a poor man called at the House and asked for Newman



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He gave him a white silk handkerchief as a sign of his gratitude. Newman accepted it "with a solemn gravity which checked even a smile" from any of the fathers. More than thirty years later he went to bed expecting to die. He had the handkerchief brought to him, and put it on, and he died with it on.

Newman's tender affection, trustful confidence, craving for sympathy, make up the temperament which was the natural basis of all his ministerial life. His ordination, in 1824, was exceptionally serious for such a man. "I have the responsibility of souls on me to the day of my death," he wrote. In 1826 he was appointed one of the public tutors of Oriel. He undertook the office in the belief that it provided him with the opportunity of pastoral work for the young men committed to his care, not merely guiding their studies, but exercising a spiritual influence over their characters and lives. He began his duties "remembering the worth of souls, and that I shall have to answer for the opportunities given me of benefiting those who are under my care." He gave up the office when he discovered that the Provost of the College took a different view of the tutorial function, and Miss Anne Mozley twice states her belief that, humanly speaking, the Oxford Movement would never have been if Newman and Hurrell Froude had continued to find spiritual opportunity in their tutorships.

The same sense of his responsibility for others is the main motive of his life-long fight against "liberalism," the false kind of freedom of thought which, as early as 1829, he foresaw was to sweep over the western world and make shipwreck of the faith of many. His opposi-

tion to this negative thought was at all times practical. "He felt a grave responsibility for forewarning and forearming those whom his words could reach." "Souls were being lured into Rationalism . . . he threw the full influence of his keen analytical powers and sympathetic personality on the side of religion to expose the snare." Liberalism, as Newman understood the word, is the philosophy which holds that there is no positive, objective, discoverable truth in the realm of religion or morality. One creed is as good as another. A man may hold any belief he pleases, but he must not think that his belief is true and that ideas which are inconsistent with it are false. Religion is a feeling, a sentiment, a taste, as subjective as the taste for sugar or tobacco; and questions of right and wrong are—in practice if not absolutely—in the same sense a matter of private judgment. And against liberalism, in this sense, Newman and his friends believed in and proclaimed the strength and sufficiency of authority. "Conscience is an authority; the Bible is an authority; such is the Church; such is antiquity."

Just as the French Revolution and its excesses meant that the fundamental problem for the social thought of the first half of the nineteenth century was the problem of Authority, so the "liberalism" which was the philosophy nourished on the Revolution posed the same problem to the Tractarians. Their primary aim was to revive belief in the Church and in its authority as the one dyke against the flood.

Of the first twenty-four of the "Tracts for the Times," no less than nine were on the authority of the ministry,

from one point of view or another. How much this teaching was needed, and what result it had, may be judged from the facts that when Newman's first tract, *Thoughts on the Ministerial Commission*, was read aloud in Mr. Gordon's rooms in Oxford, it produced uproarious laughter among the men who were present, but that these afterwards became enthusiastic followers of the movement. Six more of the first twenty-four tracts were directly on the Church, and the others dealt with threatened alterations, or existing neglect, of the Church's system and order.

Newman set forward the Tractarian doctrine of the Church as a *via media* between Rome and Protestantism. This name had already been applied to the Anglican system by writers of repute, and, as Newman saw, it was not altogether satisfactory, because at first sight it was negative; it said that Anglo-Catholicism is not Rome and it is not Protestantism, but it did not say what, positively, it is. Newman aimed at drawing the conception out into a definite shape and character, intelligible and consistent. At that time, as he said, Protestantism and Popery were real religions, but Anglo-Catholicism, viewed as an integral system, had scarcely existed except on paper. It remained to be tried whether "the religion of Andrewes, Laud, Hammond, Butler, and Wilson" could be maintained over a sufficiently large time and area to prove itself more than a modification of, or transition stage between, Romanism or popular Protestantism.

Newman taught that the Catholic Church in all lands had been one from the first for many centuries. Then

various portions had followed their own way to the injury, but not to the destruction, of truth and charity. Greek, Latin, and Anglican, each inherited the early undivided Church *in solido* as its own possession. Each branch was identical with that early undivided Church, and in the unity of that Church it had unity with the other branches. The three branches agree together in all but their later accidental errors. Some branches had maintained in detail portions of Apostolical truth and usage which the others had not; and these portions might be and should be appropriated again by the others which had let them slip.

In opposition to Protestantism, the Tractarians were compelled to define their attitude to the Bible. There was little that could be called Biblical criticism in the Church of England in the early decades of last century, and Newman took no notice of it. He was chiefly concerned to teach that the Bible is secondary to the Church as an authority in religion. The circulation of the Scriptures is a blessing, he says, and then he pulls himself up in a characteristic way :

“not that the Bible is our religion. . . . There is neither natural probability, nor supernatural promise, that individuals reading Scripture for themselves, to the neglect of other means when they can have them, will, because they pray for a blessing, be necessarily led into the knowledge of the true and complete faith of a Christian.”

After Newman had been made a Cardinal an intimate friend once asked him what he would do “in the highly improbable, but still not impossible, event” of his being elected Pope. One thing that he had decided to do was

to appoint a commission to make a full and candid report on Biblical Criticism. He felt that the received teaching in the Church on the Inspiration of Scripture needed some reconsideration. It was clear to Him that the Canonical books cannot be in every sense "inspired." It is not their function to teach history or geography. The object and the promise of Scripture inspiration is "faith and moral conduct." But the whole Biblical history is a manifestation of Divine Providence, "on the one hand interpretative, on a large scale and with analogical interpretations, of universal history, and on the other preparatory, typical and predictive, of the Evangelical Dispensation." The Bible history claims, then, in its substantial fullness to be accepted *de fide* as true.

The Tractarians say little of the relation of science to religion. Newman, certainly, did not like science students as a class and it is said that he disapproved of Physical Science as a subject of education in Oxford; and Mark Pattison, with the exaggeration of one who had first belonged to Newman with all his heart and mind, but later broke away, said that the Tracts suspended "for an indefinite period" all physical science. But those who write like that forget, not only that Church, Marriot, and others of the party studied advanced practical Physiological Histology, and that it was their votes which carried the final grant of £30,000 for the Museum, but that Newman had studied the subject, if only for a short time, as an undergraduate. He attended Buckland's lectures on geology with critical interest; but it is probably true that the most serious weakness in his

intellectual equipment, as in that of many modern Oxford men, was the want of any real understanding of natural science.

He objected (and who shall say that he was not right ?) to the language of those scientific men who appear, as Mozley says, "to have read nothing in the Bible except the first few chapters of Genesis." He was very cold also towards those who "have been too diligent and too hasty in answering every frivolous and isolated objection to the words of scripture, which has been urged—nay, which they fancied might possibly be urged—from successive discoveries in science." The Roman Catholic Dr. Newman, lecturing in Dublin on "The Idea of a University," spoke of

"religious men who, from a nervous impatience lest Scripture should for one moment seem inconsistent with the results of some speculation of the hour, are ever proposing geological or ethnological comments upon it, which they have to alter or obliterate before the ink is well dry, from changes in the progressive science which they have so officiously brought to its aid."

Newman was very much impressed by the difficulties which science creates for religion by its effect on the imagination of those who receive a modern education : "Not that his reason really deduces anything from his much-loved studies contrary to the faith, but that his imagination is bewildered, and swims with the ineffable distance of that faith from the view of things which is familiar to him." Science deals with tangible facts, practical results, ever-growing discoveries and perpetual novelties. It feeds curiosity, sustains attention, and stimulates expectation. It "will put down religion, not

by shutting its schools, but by emptying them, not by disputing its tenets, but by the superior worth and persuasiveness of (its) own."

It is probable, however, that the most impressive and religiously valuable thing that Newman ever said about science and religion occurs in a sermon which, as an Anglican, he preached on Ascension Day, on *Mysteries in Religion*. He remarks that the Scripture notices of the structure of the physical world have a very different character and effect from those which scientists offer. That difference should not produce in us

"an impatience to do what is beyond our powers, to weigh evidence, sum up, balance, decide, and reconcile, to arbitrate between the two voices of God—but a sense of the utter nothingness of worms such as we are; of our plain and absolute incapacity to contemplate things *as they really are*; a perception of our emptiness, before the great Vision of God; . . . a conviction, that what is put before us, in nature or in grace, though true in such a full sense that we dare not tamper with it, yet is but an intimation useful for particular purposes, useful for practice, useful in its department, until the day break and the shadows flee away, useful in such a way that both the one and the other representation may at once be used, as two languages, as two separate approximations towards the *Awful Unknown Truth*, such as will not mislead us in their separate several provinces."

In 1828 Newman was made Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, the University Church, and he held that position until 1843. It is impossible to describe that ministry. The memorial of it is the eight volumes of *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, at once the simplest and the greatest sermons in the English tongue. There is a restraint in the language, a limpid lucidity in the style,

a moral seriousness and directness in their teaching, and a religious sense of supernatural awe, which combine to make them incomparable. Mr. Lewis May, far from being the first to do so, has written with lyrical enthusiasm of Newman's perfect style.

"Unforced, stately but never stilted, simple, persuasive, entrancingly musical, sensitive, nervous, it is at its best a creation solitary and unrivalled in its beauty, one of those things which, like a bar of immortal music, a perfect line of poetry, a momentary light on a distant range of hills, bring tears to the eyes because of their sheer, intolerable loveliness."

It would be impossible by quotations to give any adequate notion of the impressiveness of the St. Mary's sermons. I can only illustrate it by a few passages taken at random. Here is one from the last volume :

"When I see a person hasty and violent, harsh and high-minded, careless of what others feel, and disdainful of what they think ;—when I see such a one proceeding to inquire into religious subjects, I am sure beforehand he cannot go right—he will not be led into all the truth—it is contrary to the nature of things and the experience of the world, that he should find what he is seeking. I should say the same were he seeking to find out what to believe or do in any other matter not religious—but especially in any such important and solemn inquiry ; for the *fear* of the Lord (humbleness, teachableness, reverence towards Him) is the very *beginning* of wisdom, as Solomon tells us ; it leads us to think over things modestly and honestly, to examine patiently, to bear doubt and uncertainty, to wait perseveringly for an increase of light, to be slow to speak and to be deliberate in deciding."

I take another passage from a most heart-searching sermon on Sincerity and Hypocrisy :

"A true Christian . . . is he, who, in such sense, has faith



in Him, as to live in the thought that He is present with him—present, not externally, not in nature merely, or in providence, but in his innermost heart, or in his *conscience*. A man is justified whose conscience is illuminated by God, so that he habitually realizes that all his thoughts, all the first springs of his moral life, all his motives and his wishes, are open to Almighty God. Not as if he were not aware that there is very much in him impure and corrupt, but he wishes that all that is in him should be bare to God. He believes that it is so, and he even joys to think that it is so, in spite of his fear and shame at its being so. He alone admits Christ into the shrine of his heart; whereas others wish in some way or other to be by themselves, to have a home, a chamber, a tribunal, a throne, a self where God is not—a home within them which is not a temple, a chamber which is not a confessional, a tribunal without a judge, a throne without a king;—that self may be king and judge; and that the Creator may rather be dealt with and approached as though a second party, instead of His being that true and better self, of which self itself should be but an instrument and minister.”

That is the Newman of whom many great writers have said that the undergraduates who went without their dinners in order to crowd his sermons felt that he was telling them the truth about themselves. There is a severity, almost a bleakness, about the Anglican Newman; he mellowed as he grew older; the style which had been plain as still water became full of colour. But it has been said that the effect of the St. Mary’s sermons on young men was to turn their souls inside out. But always, all through his life, Newman wrote and spoke as one belonging to another world. No other English preacher since the Industrial Revolution has had any influence outside purely ecclesiastical circles. And the strange fact about him is that he spoke to this so worldly

age in supernatural tones. If a man were asked to give from modern literature an example of the *numinous*, he could hardly do better than go to Newman's works. I give but one illustration, again from the St. Mary's sermons. He is preaching on Worship as a Preparation for Christ's Coming. In the first paragraph (it is an Advent sermon) there is the sentence—perfect in its beauty—"The year is worn out; spring, summer, autumn, each in turn, have brought their gifts and done their utmost; but they are over, and the end is come." But the sermon reaches its climax in a famous passage, quoted so often that it is almost hackneyed:

"At times we seem to catch a glimpse of a Form which we shall hereafter see face to face. We approach, and in spite of the darkness, our hands, or our head, or our brow, or our lips become, as it were, sensible of the contact of something more than earthly. We know not where we are, but we have been bathing in water, and a voice tells us that it is blood. Or we have a mark signed upon our foreheads, and it spake of Calvary. Or we recollect a hand laid upon our heads, and surely it had the print of nails in it, and resembled His who with a touch gave sight to the blind and raised the dead. Or we have been eating and drinking; and it was not a dream surely, that One fed us from His wounded side, and renewed our nature by the heavenly meat He gave."

No other than Newman could draw just those notes from the English tongue.

Newman was concerned to strengthen and purify the Church of England against infidelity, in part at least by claiming that she was the true representative in England of the early Church, in that sense Apostolic, and with a valid ministry: as much the Catholic Church in these islands as the Roman Church is in Italy. The first five

years of the Oxford Movement, then, were marked by strong, and sometimes bitter, denunciations of the errors of Rome. In 1839, however, he read an article by Wiseman which claimed that the Anglican relation to Rome in the nineteenth century was exactly parallel to that of the heretic Donatists to the Catholic Church in the time of St. Augustine.

The years that followed did but strengthen his doubts of the Anglican position. He says no more of the errors of Rome; all he tries to do now is to assert that the English Church also is Catholic. In 1841 he published the famous Tract Ninety, claiming that the Thirty-nine Articles, though they have a Calvinist sound, were not directed against the Council of Trent, and that it is quite proper to interpret them in a Catholic sense. This was a perfectly familiar argument, and could only alarm the ignorant; but it did this very effectually. One after another the Bishops "charged" against the Tract, to Newman's increasing consternation. We have seen already how entirely "dependent" on others he was by nature, as far as possible from being self-sufficient. He was the last man to set himself in lonely opposition to the general view of the Society to which he belonged. He began, therefore, to suspect that he could no longer remain in a Church which denied that the Articles meant what he believed them to mean.

Early in 1842 Newman left Oxford, and went to live at Littlemore, three miles away, but still in his parish. He has described for all the world—in the *Apologia*—the hesitations, the pain, the tears, with which, step by step, he left the Church in which he had been brought

up in order to go over to her ancient enemy. He knew that the faith of many would be shaken, many who looked to him as a leader. There would be bitterness and misunderstanding, and friends would be parted. He was now certain, however, that the Church of Rome was the one fold of Christ, and he resigned his living in September, 1843. He was determined, nevertheless, to take no irrevocable step in a hurry lest—although this seemed inconceivable—his opinion on this matter should afterwards change. He showed the care, and hesitation, and thoughtfulness with which he was acting by the fact that he remained an Anglican for more than two years after he had ceased to hold any office in the Church. He began to write the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* with the intention, if his new study of the subject did not alter his convictions, of submitting to the see of Rome when it was finished. The book is one of his greatest. All students of the philosophy of development should compare its concepts with those of Darwin, and students of comparative religion will find that it contains the central principles of their science. Before the book was quite finished—on October 8, 1845—Newman was received into the Church of Rome. The postscript gives the best contemporary picture of his mind: “One of those passages,” as R. W. Hutton remarks, “by which Newman will be remembered as long as the English language endures.”

Mr. Chesterton once described the Oxford Movement as the bow which broke when it had shot the silver arrow which was Newman. Thank God, the statement is not true, as the events of 1933 proved, if any proof

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were needed. But the loss of Newman was a tragedy. Mr. Gladstone, an acute observer, said :

“ In my opinion his secession from the Church of England has never been estimated among us at anything like the full amount of its calamitous importance. It has been said that the world does not know its greatest men ; neither, I will add, is it aware of the power and weight carried by the words and acts of those among its greatest men whom it does know. The ecclesiastical historian will perhaps hereafter judge that this secession was a much greater event than the partial secession of John Wesley, the only case of personal loss suffered by the Church of England since the Reformation which can be at all compared with it in magnitude. I do not refer to its effect upon the mere balance of schools or parties in the Church ; that is an inferior question. I refer to its effect upon the state of positive belief and the attitude and capacities of the religious mind of England.”

Rome was very proud of her capture of Newman, as any Church might be proud of such a convert. The effect of it can be seen in a readiness, at first, to make much of him and of the others who went with him, in a new spirit of assurance in the Roman Church in England, and in Wiseman's anxiety to use Newman to win over the “ High Church ” party among the Anglicans. But it was not long before signs began to appear that Newman did not quite fit his new environment. He knew, as the Roman authorities and theologians could not know, how widespread and strong and subtle were the anti-Christian forces in English thought, and how weak and ill-equipped to meet them was the Roman Church in England : he was reluctant to do anything to weaken the Church of England as a bulwark against infidelity until Rome was strong enough in this country

to take its place. There was bound to be misunderstanding ; for if *Ecclesia Anglicana* had not known how to use Newman, *Ecclesia Romana* could not use him.

From 1850 to 1864 Newman was " under a cloud " ; they were years of failure and humiliation, when everything he tried to do was suspected, opposed, spoiled. He was sent to Dublin to found a Catholic University for the British Isles, and he found that the Irish bishops regarded every intellectual man as on the road to perdition. Mr. Lewis May has said that it was as if a Persian cat of royal lineage and delicate nurture had strayed by accident into some great, draughty, dilapidated house where the pets, a miscellaneous rabble of hard-bitten, wire-haired terriers, were suffered to roam at will ! After seven years of futile effort he gave up the struggle, having accomplished nothing except one incomparable book, the *Lectures on the Idea of a University*. The masterly comparison, in that book, between a gentleman and a Christian is too well known to be quoted ; it is one of the classical passages of English prose. Very interestingly, the Abbé Bremond said of it that it was an involuntary criticism of the incumbent of St. Mary's, and that it gives us the portrait of the Rector of the University of Dublin, of the better, of the true Newman.

Then Wiseman, become (with much sound and fury) Archbishop of Westminster, suggested a new translation of the Bible into English, Newman engaged contributors, planned an introductory essay on the Philosophy of the Sacred Narrative, and—was put off with the instruction that as an American Bishop had already started work

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on a new version, he should give up his own scheme and help the Bishop! He tried to bring about a better understanding between the Roman authorities and Acton and others who were running an intellectual review for Catholics. He got into hot water with both parties, and was formally delated for heresy. Bremond says that he was challenged to choose between submission and independence—he who, in his inmost consciousness, found no difficulty whatever in remaining at once wholly and loyally subject and bravely independent.

He was a failure. His health was bad. He was over sixty years of age, practically unknown to the English intellectual world, steeped in the futile pathos of a king in exile: a lion who had ceased to roar! In 1863 he counted for nothing at all.

At the end of 1863 Charles Kingsley, a very good and well-meaning man, made a sudden and unprovoked attack on the Roman clergy, and joined Newman's name to it. "Truth for its own sake, he said, has never been a virtue with the Roman clergy. Father Newman informs us that it need not be, and on the whole ought not to be:—that cunning is the weapon which Heaven has given to the saints wherewith to withstand the brute male force of the world." Newman asked that Kingsley should explain where he had said that Catholic priests ought not to tell the truth. Kingsley answered that it was in Sermon No. XX in a volume published in 1844. Newman pointed out that that sermon was preached and published while he was an Anglican, and asked which passages in it meant that truth ought not to be a virtue for the saints. Kingsley said that he was glad that

Newman's words did not mean what he had thought they meant. Newman pointed out that Kingsley would neither justify his attack nor withdraw it. Returning to the charge with a final pamphlet—*What then does Dr. Newman mean?*—Kingsley invited him to write himself down a fool for believing in ecclesiastical miracles or a knave for pretending to believe in them.

Newman saw that for the moment the sympathy of the public was with him; they felt that Kingsley had been ungenerous to a man who had given up everything for conscience' sake. He seized his opportunity, and began to publish, in seven fortnightly parts, the history of his religious opinions—*Apologia pro Vita Sua*. Each part, as it appeared, had a tremendous popular success. The strain of writing them was terrific. Once Newman worked for sixteen hours at a stretch, and once he wrote for twenty-two hours running. It is probably the greatest book he ever wrote—"that peerless book," Dr. Alexander Whyte called it. It made Newman's place once for all in the mind of his compatriots, and justified the statement that he was the man in the working of whose individual mind the intelligent portion of the English public was more interested than in that of any other living man. They admired him, and believed in his good faith.

For almost thirty years, now, from 1864 to his death, Newman's life was strong and successful. He had the gratitude of his fellow Roman Catholics, and particularly of his brethren of the priesthood, and he had the confidence of his fellow-countrymen. In the following year appeared *The Dream of Gerontius*, hardly a great



poem—in spite of the fact that it has been compared to Dante's *Divine Comedy*!—but a magnificent piece of religious rhetoric. It has been said that every man should have it by heart who has it before him to die. Father Ryder tells of a poor stocking weaver who on his death-bed made his wife read it to him continually, and after General Gordon's death his copy was sent to Newman, who was much interested to notice the pencil marks against his favourite passages.

Newman's work on the philosophy of faith—of which the volume of *Oxford University Sermons* and the *Development of Christian Doctrine* are the main pillars—received its completion in 1870 with the *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. P. Thureau-Dangin has pointed out the significance of this title.

“Lui-même, si ferme qu'il soit dans sa foi personnelle, ne prétend pas apporter, aux difficultés soulevées, des solutions qui puissent satisfaire tous les esprits, et quand, après de longues années de méditations, il tâchera d'établir comment se forme l'acte de foi, il donnera à son livre ce titre singulier : *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, marquant par là qu'il n'entend pas formuler un système devant être enseigné d'autorité à toutes les intelligences, et qu'il offre seulement, à ceux à qui cela peut être utile, le moyen par lequel il a satisfait sa raison, sans subordonner d'ailleurs sa propre foi à la valeur du système par lequel il a essayé de l'analyser.”

Over and over again, in his writings, Newman declares that religion cannot be based on reasoning. The epigraph on the title-page of the *Grammar of Assent* is a quotation from St. Ambrose : “Non in dialectica complacuit Deo saluum facere populum suum.” It is as absurd to argue men as to torture them into believ-

ing. There are no truths of religion to which reason cannot, if it will, find ready objection. He declines to accept "common sense" as a judge of religious belief. And reason, if it is to be used in theology at all, must be recognized as an instrument in the hands of spiritual discernment. The essential principle and sanction of Religion in the mind is conscience, as he says often, but never more impressively than in the great and too little studied sermon on *Natural and Revealed Religion*. For this is perhaps the place to remark that Newman has as little sympathy with mysticism as with rationalism. Writing to a lady in doubt, he quotes her as saying: "To see and touch the supernatural with the eye of my soul, with its own experience, this is what I want to do." Yes, it is (he replies), you wish to walk "not by faith, but by sight." If you had experience, how would it be faith? In this matter he is with Kant, although he did not get to know the *Critical Philosophy* until late in life.

The internal evidence for revealed religion, Newman held, is supplied by conscience. Faith has its life in a certain moral temper, for its intuitions and convictions about God and immortality and judgment are really implied in the absolute imperative which Conscience gives. Faith, then, rests on one's prepossessions; the main evidence which it requires is what it brings with it, its desire that certain ideals shall be real. It is the duty of the Christian, therefore, to trust his own heart, in spite of the gainsaying of men. It is his very function to be moving against the world, and to be protesting against the majority of voices. It follows that, on

the one hand, a man is responsible for his faith and, on the other hand, that it is an error to judge religion without preparation of heart ; religious truth is only rightly interpreted by a man who is trained to practise what he believes. This is why probabilities have so much to do with religion ; its appeal is not to understanding but to character ; and what is probable or improbable to any individual depends on his moral temperament. "The religious mind," Dr. Newman wrote to Mr. Wilfrid Ward, "sees much which is invisible to the irreligious mind. They have not the same evidence before them." Similarly, a good and bad man will think very different things probable. There is a sense, therefore, in which probability is more important than fact ; it is the life of the proof of religion, as fact is the beginning of the proof of science. Probability is the *soul* of fact, Newman says. And we can see that it depends on intuition, as knowledge depends upon the senses. Faith, then, as Newman understands it, is a sole, elementary, complete act of the mind—creative, as reason is critical—its driving power deep in the hidden springs of character. It lives in and from a desire after those things which it accepts and confesses ; as St. Paul says, "Faith energises through love," and it calls man to a voluntary adventure for the things which are true and pure and lovely.

"If we are intended for great ends," Newman says, "we are called to great hazards ; and, whereas we are given absolute certainty in nothing, we must in all things choose between doubt and inactivity, and the conviction that we are under the eye of One who, for whatever reason, exercises us with the less evidence when He might give us the greater. He has put it

into our hearts, who loves us ; and He bids us examine it, indeed, with our best judgment, reject this and accept that, but still all the while as loving Him in our turn ; not coldly and critically, but with the thought of His presence, and the reflection that perchance by the defects of the evidence He is trying our love of its matter ; and that perchance it is a law of His providence to speak less loudly the more He promises."

Writers so different in general outlook as Fr. Neville Figgis and Dr. John Oman have said that Newman was no true Butlerian, and that his calling Butler " Master " was a mistake. It is true that Newman sees that Butler's theory of probability is, by itself, not enough. Men do not overcome the world in the strength of a belief that it is probably true that there is a God. They *know* whom they have believed. And the object of the *Grammar of Assent* is to show what is that constitution of the human mind which enables it to be sure and certain as a result of evidence which mere logic declares to warrant nothing more than probability. This account of the nature of faith, however, makes it clear that Newman had grasped the teaching of Butler—whose name he said was the greatest in the English Church—at its most essential point, and did but express it for an age in which the conscious and unconscious influence of Kant was making itself increasingly felt.

Whether this account of the nature of faith is Butlerian or not, it is curiously Protestant in sound for this opponent of private judgment, who is known to have been anxiously obedient to ecclesiastical authority. Dr. George Copeland wrote, in 1870, in admiration of " Newman's assertion of individualism and his main-

tenance of the fundamental truth that each man is himself and not another."

"In these branches of inquiry," Newman says, "egotism is true modesty. In religious inquiry each of us can speak only for himself, and for himself he has a right to speak. His own experiences are enough for himself, but he cannot speak for others: he cannot lay down the law; he can only bring his own experiences to the common stock of psychological facts. He knows what has satisfied and satisfies himself; if it satisfies him, it is likely to satisfy others; if, as he believes and is sure, it is true, it will approve itself to others also, for there is but one truth."

How can he reconcile this individualism—that goes so far as to say that it is the very business of the Christian to be protesting against the majority of voices, with this other statement, from the *Development of Christian Doctrine*?

"For me, dear brethren, did I know myself well, I should doubtless find I was open to the temptation as well as others to take a line of my own, or what is called, to set up for myself; but whatever might be my real infirmity in this matter, I should, from mere common sense, and common delicacy, hide it from myself, and give it some good name in order to make it palatable. I never could get myself to say, 'Listen to me for I have something great to tell you, which no one else knows, but of which there is no manner of doubt.' I should be kept from such extravagance by an intense sense of the intellectual absurdity which, in my feelings, such a claim would involve."

How is trust in the authority of the Church to be based securely on faith, understood in the personal moral sense in which Newman has described it? In particular, how can acceptance of the Church's infallibility be based on the probability which is the most that moral

evidence can yield? Newman, indeed, is quite aware that his account of faith can be perverted into a contempt of authority, a neglect of the Church, and an arrogant reliance on self; and those who are satisfied with this interpretation of his philosophy must somehow reconcile it with his assertion that the existence of the Church has been the *external* evidence of Revealed Religion, as the moral sense has supplied its *internal* evidence, and his warning lest a misuse of reason should disparage "the supreme authority of Christian fellowship." Just as certainly as Newman, before Ritschl or Lord Balfour or the pragmatists, gave a correct indication of that true account of the human mind which will vindicate faith against the attacks of an over-confident rationalism, so he showed how trust in the Church is an inevitable expression and protection of the intensely individual and moral nature of saving faith. It has been well summed up by Dr. George Copeland, the brother of Newman's curate at Littlemore, in some letters which have not yet been published.

"He has, as it were, laid the foundation of a viaduct capable of bridging over the whole distance between the *theologia pectoris* of the German school, that is, the infallibility of the unsophisticated conscience of the individual, and the infallibility of the Church his teacher . . . a viaduct capable of bridging over the whole distance between the liberty of conscience and the full acceptance of dogma. . . . He has shadowed forth a method of making it appear how a man may be a Roman Catholic without ceasing to be a Christian."

This great achievement rests on Newman's theory of the development of doctrine.

The Christian revelation is the development of what

conscience tells us of God and duty. Conscience recognizes the authority of Christ as absolute, and that is what is meant by the acceptance of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Similarly, the belief in a future judgment, as Newman says, and as Butler had said before him, is the development of the declaration of conscience as to the eternal distinction between right and wrong. But Christianity, appealing to "babes" as well as to "the wise and prudent," is not fully understood as soon as it is accepted. What is at first implicit becomes explicit as the mind reflects on what it has apprehended.

"The mind which is habituated to the thought of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, naturally turns with a devout curiosity to the contemplation of the Object of its adoration, and begins to form statements concerning it, before it knows whither, or how far, it will be carried. One proposition necessarily leads to another, and a second to a third; then some limitation is required; and the combination of these opposites occasions some fresh evolutions from the original idea, which indeed can never be said to be entirely exhausted. This process is its development and results in a series, or rather body, of dogmatic statements, till what was an impression on the imagination has become a system or creed in the reason."

But the Christian is not merely an individual, and not merely an intelligence. He is a living human being with all kinds of correspondences with a natural, social, and spiritual environment. His faith will produce changes in those correspondences and in that complex environment, and will, in its turn, be changed by them. The sects and parties of Judaism, the races and peoples of the Roman Empire, the religions and philosophies of the first three centuries, the Barbarians, the heresies,

the Dark Ages, the New Europe of the Middle Ages—and it has become the Catholic Church! It introduced itself into the framework and details of social life, changing public opinion, and strengthening or undermining the foundations of established order. Thus in time it grew into a code of morality, into systems of government, into a theology, into a ritual. And this body of thought, thus laboriously gained, is after all little more than the proper representative of the original Christian revelation, being in substance what that meant from the beginning, its complete image as seen in a combination of diversified aspects, with the suggestions and corrections of many minds, and the illustration of many experiences.

The theory of the development of doctrine, as Newman put it forward, has been much criticized since 1845, from many points of view, historical, philosophical, and theological. But the *fact* of the development of doctrine remains, and has to be taken into account. It means that in some sense the ultimate authority in religion cannot be the reason or conscience of the individual, or his private interpretation of scripture; it cannot be merely antiquity, or merely the Church of to-day. The conscience of the individual must be recognized as the product and expression of the historic life of the Catholic Church. "Here below," says Newman, "to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." And in another place he says, "Truth is wrought out by many minds working freely together." This whole conception of religion and life led him, as we have seen, to submit to the Roman Church. He was loyal to an



ideal Catholicism which he thought was embodied in the actual Roman system. In fact, however, the Papal despotism makes it difficult for minds to work *freely* together within the Roman Church. But this surely does come out clearly from the considerations which Newman lays down, and we can state it in his own words: "Whatever history teaches, whatever it omits, whatever it exaggerates or attenuates, whatever it says and unsays, at least the Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If ever there were a safe truth, it is this."

Even after the "crowning mercy" of 1864 Newman found criticism and opposition within the Roman Church. Manning, for example, managed to defeat his scheme for a Roman Catholic Hall at Oxford. Soon after the accession of Leo XIII, however, the Roman Catholic laity of England, headed by the Duke of Norfolk, petitioned his Holiness to make Dr. Newman a Cardinal, and the Pope welcomed the suggestion. Newman was very much touched. The impossible had happened. After all these years the Church of his adoption and humble loyalty had owned his work with a crowning approval. Newman, at the age of 79, became a Prince of the Church.

*Punch*, like the English people as a whole, has never been too friendly to Rome. Its two comments on this incident are the more significant. On March 1, 1879, it said:

A Cardinal's hat! Fancy Newman in *that*,  
 For the crown o'er his grey temples spread!  
 'Tis the good and great head would honour the hat,  
 Not the hat that would honour the head.

And on his return from Rome this great organ of national opinion addressed him directly :

“Most venerable Cardinal Newman, Your Eminence has well earned your Scarlet Hat. It is to yourself, probably, that the Pope owes the reflecting portion of his British converts. A thoughtful man, if any dogma that you subscribe appears nonsense to him, naturally asks himself, Whether is the more likely, that you should credit an absurdity, or that he should be an ass? . . .”

The Pope's own comment was unusually outspoken, and gives food for much thought. In 1888 Leo XIII said to Lord Selborne : “My Cardinal ! It was not easy, it was not easy. They said he was too liberal ; but I had determined to honour the Church in honouring Newman. I always had a cult for him. I am proud that I was allowed to honour such a man.”

The last eleven years of the old man's life were years of glad brightness among his brethren at the Birmingham Oratory. Many of the greatest writers of the time have described the visits they paid to him there, and what they saw. I may be allowed to quote one, the late Lord Rosebery :

“Arrived at the Oratory at five. The sitting-room a mere cell filled with books.

“The Cardinal just like a saint's remains over a high altar, waxy, distant, emaciated, in a mitre, rich gloves whereon the ring (which I kissed), rich slippers. With the hat at the foot.

“And this was the end of the young Calvinist, the Oxford don, the austere Vicar of St. Mary's. It seemed as if a whole cycle of human thought and life were concentrated in that august repose. That was my overwhelming thought. ‘Kindly Light’ had led a guided Newman to this strange, brilliant, incomparable end. . . . The body so frail and slight that it had ceased to be a body terrestrial.”

He who did not value outward honours or the praise of men was glad of this honour because it crowned his work with the Church's approval, and backed his appeal to the modern mind with the Church's authority. He died in peace in the Birmingham Oratory on August 11, 1890, and his body was buried in the same grave as that of Father Ambrose St. John, his "fidus Achates." The simple cross bears the epitaph he had chosen himself: *Ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem.*

John Henry Newman is one of the supreme masters of English prose. There have been greater English philosophers, and greater theologians; but if we remember his consistently unworldly life, the beauty of his personality, his unique power of conveying by his words the awful sense of God, and his almost incredible sympathy with the difficulties of unbelievers, we shall dare to say that Newman's is the greatest name in English religion.

## THE GOSPEL FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT

**A**THEISM has come back. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was the fashion to say that atheism was out of fashion. The militant unbelief of Bradlaugh and the Secularist Society, and even the less dogmatic form of negative thinking which T. H. Huxley called Agnosticism, had largely given place to the comparatively modest assertion that the case for religion had not been made out. To-day, however, it is not uncommon for a man to declare himself an atheist. Some typical moderns, it is well known, have not hesitated to embrace, not only theism, but even Christianity; and not only Christianity, but even Catholicism. Indeed, it is not too much to say that it is common for opponents of Christianity to admit that Catholicism is intellectually respectable. On the other hand, however, some moderns go further than saying, "I do not know whether there is a God or not." They say there is no God. Atheism, as distinct from agnosticism, is a considerable factor in contemporary thought.

A typical illustration of this point of view is *The Modern Temper*, a book published in 1929 by Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch, a writer whose scholarship and capacity give him a great influence in the United States to-day. "Unlike their grandfathers," he says, "those who are

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the victims of (the modern temper) do not and never expect to believe in God." Later he says :

"Illusions have been lost one by one. God, instead of disappearing in an instant, has retreated step by step, and surrendered gradually His control of the universe. Once He decreed the fall of every sparrow and counted the hairs of every head ; a little later He became merely the original source of the laws of nature. . . . The rôle which He plays grows less and less, and man is left more and more alone in a universe to which he is completely alien."

But he stands out naked and unashamed in the declaration : " St. Augustine submitted completely to the imaginary will of a non-existent God."

Atheism finds ruthless expression, also, in the writings of younger men. It is characteristic, indeed, of the younger generation that it is so determined to make its own path for itself that it does not trouble to explore the paths already made to see whether they lead anywhere. In an article called " After Religion, What ? " which appeared in *Harper's Magazine* for April, 1934, Mr. F. S. Hopkins says :

" The serious-minded among my contemporaries are completely baffled by any point of view which does not give full weight to the flaming scepticism of our time. We who are in our late twenties are simply not interested in religions, social or supernatural ; we have outgrown the dilemma of our parents. Our problem is not how to make Christianity palatable, but what to put in the place of the Christianity we have rejected."

Later on, he explains the situation in a little more detail.

" It was, after all, those now in their late thirties and early

forties who were the true iconoclasts ; they tore the gods from the throne. In riotous defiance of the established order, they debunked religion, heaped scorn on tradition, demolished the old sex taboos, and attacked convention on every side. . . . We have no desire to restore what has been destroyed."

He writes, as he tells us, for those now in their late twenties. It goes without saying that he can only write for some of them.

Contemporary atheism includes many lines of thought. To understand some of them we must go back to the Renaissance and Reformation, but they were brought to a focus by the Great War of 1914-1918. The men and women who went through the war came out more or less wounded in body ; some of them were terribly maimed. But that was the smaller part of what they suffered. The *self* was wounded, torn to pieces, frustrated, bludgeoned into an indifference which was as far as possible from being acceptance. So far as they were concerned, nothing that happened after that could have any meaning. Their lives, their souls, had been torn from their anchors. They had no faith, no hope. Still less had they any self-control. Because life has no meaning, every desire must have its way the moment it presents itself. For them there was little left but excitement, and having a good time. There was friendship also, and the smaller kinds of loyalty ; but there were sudden hatreds, and the ruthless grasp of beasts of prey. Those who want to understand it all may find it in the novels of Mr. Ernest Hemingway, and in *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It means that human life has no meaning, and that any man, all men, what they are and what they do, are entirely unimportant.

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That is the conviction that the war burned into the minds of some of those who suffered it. The result is that they are ostentatiously indifferent to religion. They are "simply not interested." And they are encouraged in their irreligious philosophy and practice by what seems to them the plain fact that Christianity is a decaying culture, if not one already dead. They are willing to grant, if any one is interested to maintain, that Christianity has great achievements to its credit in the past: in the thirteenth century, for example. But they assert that it has no creative influence to-day, and no means of getting any. It is very largely cut off from any fruitful contact with the actual world: with politics, business, science, the arts, public education, and social service. In the thirteenth century the focal dominating building in any village was the church, as in any city it was the cathedral. In modern towns the important corner positions are occupied by the banks. It is in them that we put our marble pillars. When the "places of worship" are built it is on the sites which are left over by the large department stores and office buildings which are so much more imposing to the eye than are the churches. These things are an allegory.

The main channels of modern culture are the arts. Painting used to be largely religious in its inspiration and ecclesiastical in its patronage. Now it is almost completely secularized. And there are no great Christian novelists or dramatists anywhere in the world. It is significant that religion plays no part at all in so comprehensive a description of English middle-class life as the *Forsyte Saga*. And, in spite of *St. Joan*, the *Adven-*

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*tures of the Black Girl in her Search for God* and the Preface to *Androcles and the Lion* make it quite clear that Mr. Bernard Shaw has never thought it worth while to try to understand the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion. And there are very few poets or sculptors of the first rank, in either Europe or America, whose inspiration is Christian.

Dr. Christian Gauss, the Dean of Princeton University, has said recently that a census of the volumes of any public or college or national library to-day, compared with a similar census made in former centuries, will immediately indicate how much less of the public interest is now given to religious or theological problems. Even before the stimulus to religious controversy given by the Reformation, he says, the most popular books of the late Renaissance period were devotional. The lives of the saints were once popular reading for the same reason that the life of a secular poet like Shelley, or a scientist like Pasteur, or a statesman like Lincoln or Washington, or a captain of industry like Ford, is popular to-day. The life of the saint represented to the reader of a few centuries back the highest and most significant type of success in life.

It is commonly asserted that Christianity has now no means of making its influence real in modern culture. It used to be the root of man's spiritual life, the meaning of his civilization; now most people rarely think about it, and have no way of getting to understand it. The pulpit, which used to be the main channel of Christian influence, is now of no importance whatever. Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, with the



exception of Cardinal Newman, there has been no preacher in England who has had any considerable influence outside ecclesiastical circles. The popular newspapers hold symposia on such subjects as "Is there a God?" and "Shall we live again?" Novelists, jockeys, film-stars, boxers, and all kinds of people take part in these, and the public appears to be interested. But the most popular preachers draw comparatively meagre audiences. It is thought to be a great thing if, in a modern city, one per cent of the population comes to hear a sermon.

It is asserted with confidence, also, that in the world of action, of political and social leadership, the Christian religion makes little difference. It is true that Hitler and Mussolini are Catholics, but it is claimed that for vision, for constructive and creative energy, and for a fierce resolve that justice shall be done to the poor, they are not fit to be mentioned beside Lenin and Stalin, the atheists. It would be hard to convince an ordinary student of politics that at times when the interests of one nation clash with the good of mankind the attitude of Great Britain or the United States differs in any recognizable way from that of a non-Christian state like Japan. We have to face the fact that men are saying that Christian culture is on its death-bed, if it be not already dead.

Contemporary atheism has as many sources as the River Thames. Perhaps the earliest, and certainly not the least important, of these, was the disaster of the Reformation. I use that word deliberately—disaster—not provocatively, but sadly. I have no doubt that the Church deserved and needed reforming. I am willing to believe

(I am no historian, and am compelled to accept what historians say) that all over Europe there were ecclesiastical persons of various ranks in the hierarchy who had more power and more wealth, and less piety and less goodness, than were good for the community at large. But it was undoubtedly a disaster that it did not prove possible to reform Western Christendom without shattering it into many bits. That fact is the main cause of a fundamental change in the attitude of civilized man towards religion. During most of the history of the human race membership in a religious society, in a church, has been taken for granted. That meant that a man did not feel it necessary to give, either to himself or to others, definite, positive reasons for belief in God; but he felt it necessary to give reasons for his atheism, if he did not believe. The existence of many, different, rival societies, each claiming to have the truth, forces people to ask questions. And one question which they all ask is: "Has any of these societies the truth?" For the first time in history faith is on the defensive. The onus of proof used to be on the atheist; it is characteristic of our period that the onus of proof is on the believer.

A divided Christendom, a permanently divided Christendom, will not succeed in ruling man's life in the name of God. After the Reformation there came the blasphemous rule, *cuius regio, eius religio*, which means that the government of a country chooses its religion. The Wars of Religion were the other side of that rule. By the year 1660 men in Western Europe began to grasp the fact that the divisions in Christianity were permanent. The Catholics were not going to conquer or persuade

the Protestants, and the Protestants could not persuade or conquer the Catholics. Men grew tired of the endless quarrel. That was the birthday of modern atheism, for, as Mr. Chesterton has said, two religions are so much less than one. The fundamental cause of the practical and theoretical atheism of the modern world is the disunion among Christians. It has been said that it is not easy to remain warmly convinced that the authority of any one religious society is divine, when as a matter of daily experience all societies have to be treated alike.

The second main cause of contemporary atheism is the subjectivism which dogs modern thought like its shadow. Luther was a subjectivist. The main concern of his theology was to show how an individual can be certain that his sins are forgiven. He could have sung the "Moody and Sankey" hymn, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine; O what a foretaste of glory divine." For him the test of saving faith is "Christian experience," the sense of joy and peace which comes through believing that one's sins have been forgiven through the death of Christ. So that when he had not those feelings, he was cast into despair. Man and his feelings, not God and his will, become the centre of religion. The ultimate test of religious truth is to be found in the emotional state of the individual.

A similar subjectivism is to be found in Descartes. His most famous phrase may be used as a definition of what is fundamentally wrong with modern thought. "Cogito, ergo sum"—"I am conscious, therefore I exist"—means that a man is more certain of his own consciousness than of anything else. So it is that the

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modern thinker can never be quite certain why he is certain of the existence of an "external" world. And, for similar reasons, he never persuades himself that humanity's knowledge of God is not a delusion.

This persistent subjectivism of much that is typical of modern thought is, indeed, the source of an attack on Christianity which impresses many of our contemporaries as very formidable indeed. This is the psychological criticism of the claims of religion. It is said that the universality of religion, in some form, may tell us a great deal about the nature of man, but nothing at all of the reality of God. It expresses a great human need, but that is all. There is no reason to believe that there is any reality corresponding to that need, to satisfy it.

The first essay in Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Do What You Will* is typical of this mental attitude. He says that to talk about religion except in terms of human psychology is an irrelevance. Jehovah, Allah, the Trinity, Jesus, Buddha, are names for a great variety of human virtues, human mystical experiences, human æsthetic emotions, human remorse, human compensatory fancies, human terrors, human cruelties. *Quot homines, tot dei!* The human mind is both diverse and simple, simultaneously many and one; that is the reason, and there is no other, why some believe in many gods and some believe in one god. It does not explain why most men have been polytheists, while monotheism is confined, almost entirely, to one very narrow historical tradition: but a knowledge of the actual history of religions is not very widespread among the psychological critics of Christianity. And if

Mr. Huxley's statement means anything at all, it suggests, not that some should be monotheists and some polytheists, but that most people should hold a doctrine of the type of the orthodox Trinitarian doctrine, which expresses a multiplicity in unity. Mr. Huxley is content to say, however, that monotheism and polytheism are rationalizations of distinct psychological states, both undeniably existent as facts of experience; and that it is quite impossible for us, with the merely human faculties at our disposal, to choose between them.

Mr. Huxley says that the only facts of which we have direct knowledge are psychological facts. The Nature of things (of which, of course, we have no direct knowledge, although Mr. Huxley forgets to remind himself or us of this!) presents us with them. One fact cannot be more of a fact than another. Our psychological experiences are all equally facts. There is nothing to choose between them. No psychological experience is truer than another, so far as we are concerned. For even if one should correspond more closely to things in themselves as perceived by some hypothetical non-human being, it would be impossible for us to discover which it was. Some quite eminent thinkers, from Plato to Whitehead, have thought that they knew what they meant when they used the word "true." But Mr. Aldous Huxley knows better.

This fundamental assumption of modern thought, that I am more certain of my own sensations, thoughts, desires, and emotions than of anything else, is only an assumption. But it is an assumption that makes my own consciousness entirely meaningless and unimportant.

It cuts man off from his fellows, and from the world in which he lives, and there is no way of joining together what it has put asunder. I cannot argue, for there is no one with whom I can argue, and nothing about which I can argue. The universe is a dream which I dream in private. Descartes began by doubting everything but his own existence. The fact that modern idealists—Berkeley, Kant, A. S. Eddington, Jeans, and Aldous Huxley—all believe that Descartes existed, means that they do not start from his assumption, “I am conscious,” but from a slightly different assumption, “I am conscious of something.” And that slight difference makes all the difference in the world.

Mr. Chesterton, in his valuable little book on St. Thomas Aquinas, points out that the saint does not deal at all with what many now think the main physical question: whether we can prove that the primary act of recognition of any reality is real.

“St. Thomas recognizes instantly, what so many modern sceptics have begun to suspect rather laboriously, that a man must either answer that question in the affirmative, or else never answer any question; never ask any question; never even exist intellectually to answer or to ask. I suppose it is true, in a sense, that a man can be a fundamental sceptic; but he cannot be anything else, certainly not a defender of fundamental scepticism. . . . To this question, ‘Is there anything?’ St. Thomas begins by answering, ‘Yes’; if he began by answering ‘No,’ it would not be the beginning, but the end. That is what some of us mean by common sense. Either there is no philosophy, no philosophers, no thinkers, no thought, no anything; or else there is a real bridge between the mind and reality.”

The same common-sense criticism of modern sub-

jectivism has been stated very effectively by Professor C. C. J. Webb, in the *Hibbert Journal* for October, 1933.

"It is the very nature of a mind," he says, "to be aware of an object : something, that is, distinct from and independent of the mental act whereby or wherein we are aware of it. And so whenever we think there is in existence no such independent fact as that of which someone professes to be aware, we say that such an one is *out of his mind*."

So much for Mr. Huxley.

The contemporary prestige of psychology is very great, but it is largely undeserved. It is a heterogeneous conglomeration of mutually inconsistent theories. An innocent enquirer who read consecutively books by McDougall, Freud, Jung, Adler, and Watson, would not only find that each of them has its own vocabulary, but would be persuaded that each of them dealt with a separate subject. All these systems cannot be true and adequate accounts of the human mind ; if Adler is right, Freud is wrong, and if McDougall is to be believed, Watson is, intellectually, beneath contempt. It is conceivable that they are all false or, at any rate, far less important than they have persuaded the modern world that they are. Often they succeed in giving no more than pretentious expression to commonplace and unimportant truisms. Much of what Freud says about complexes, for example, amounts to little more than saying that those who had unpleasant shocks when they were young did not like it and that their present beliefs and behaviour are sometimes affected by the prejudices which result therefrom.

Speaking generally, the attempts to discredit religion

from the standpoint of psychology confuse the question of the origin of a statement with that of its validity, the story of how an opinion is arrived at with the question of whether it is true; to use the Archbishop of York's phrase, they confuse history with logic. This is a fallacy which was very common in the nineteenth century, when both historians and evolutionary scientists were tempted to think that if they could show the ancestry of a creature, or opinion, or institution, they had proved that the end of the development has no more value or meaning than the beginning. Man is descended from a sponge and, through many more generations, from an amœba; therefore, it is argued, it is absurd to enquire whether he has or is an immortal soul. But man is not a sponge or an amœba—if he were there would be little meaning in saying that he is "descended" from one of these creatures. The history of a development may throw very little light on present quality. Similarly, it is alleged that civilized morality—the sense of justice, honesty, and shame—is derived from tribal expediency. Even if this could be established, it would not follow that justice is no more than expediency. Religion had its origin, it is alleged, in the dreams and terrors of primitive man. The evidence offered for this kind of generalization is often obscure, and probably contradictory. But even if the statement were true it would not prove that there is no more in ethical monotheism than there was in those early fancies or emotions. Still less is there any logical reason for saying that the sense of justice or the belief in God is valueless because it had such a lowly origin. One might as well say that a lily



is not beautiful because the bulb was planted in mud and manure.

Freud says that faith in God is a "sublimation" of repressed incestual impulses—the Œdipus complex, and similar nastinesses. The Catholic arguments for theism, on this view, are only rationalizations, reasons discovered or invented for beliefs held on sub-rational and, indeed, unconscious grounds. To be consistent, of course, he should admit that his own belief in psychoanalysis is also a product of unconscious impulses, and that the arguments by which he seeks to persuade his contemporaries are only rationalizations. So that if theism is discredited because the arguments for it are rationalizations, psychoanalysis is discredited for the same reason; but if psychoanalysis discredits itself there is no reason why the theistic arguments should not be considered on their merits. Apart from this, however, even if it be proved that faith in God is an expression of unconscious impulses, so that God is a "Father-image," or an objectification or projection of "libido," that only describes religion as a psychological phenomenon; it describes the path by which, and the reasons why, the soul comes to trust in God. The question still remains, has that trust any objective correlate? Is there, in fact, a God? And that is a question for the philosopher and theologian and the man of common sense. It does not belong to the field of the psychologist. The psychologist may, if he can, show how a man comes to believe that nine sevens are sixty-three. On the Freudian principles, he may demonstrate what are the repressed sexual maladjustments which give rise to that almost incredible convic-

tion. And if you stop him and say—"Yes, but are nine sevens sixty-three, as a matter of fact?" his answer must be: "As a psychologist, I am not interested in that question, and I do not know the answer. You must go to the mathematician for that."

The same thing is true of all the other psychological interpretations of religion. Jung and Aldous Huxley may write plausibly of Jesus as the symbol of something in the unconscious, whether individual or racial (whatever the racial unconscious may be supposed to be). We are favoured with long rhodomontades on the Hero—with a capital H. And when the clouds have rolled away we have to face the fact that Jesus was more than a symbol. He was a fact, and only important as a symbol because He was a fact—because He belonged to the objective, external, real world. Any competent historian of the ancient world—Eduard Meyer, for example—would refuse to waste any time on the suggestion that Jesus was a product of the imagination, and not an actual historical figure, who really lived, or that His life in Palestine was not the actual beginning of the Christian movement. The psychology which offers itself as a substitute for philosophy, theology, or history has little substance in it.

Another important element in contemporary thought—the complete secularization of politics—is the direct result of the Reformation, and of the setting up of a number of religious societies, each claiming to set forth the true faith. Where churches and sects contend one against another, the state is forced sooner or later to be neutral—i.e. to be agnostic. An undoubted result of

the Reformation has been that the whole realm of politics has been emancipated from the authority of the Christian religion. No modern state acknowledges, in its political action, either the will of God or the moral law; and this applies both to foreign and internal affairs. The League of Nations is not a Christian institution; it makes no appeal to Christian sanctions or motives. At its best it represents a sort of Stoic ideal of the unity of mankind, while in much of its activity it provides an opportunity, not only for shameless nationalism, but also for corrupt lobbying of the most barefaced kind. And if there is anyone who still believes that our internal politics are ruled by religious or moral motives, let him read the report of the debate on dog-racing tracks in the House of Commons on December 2, 1932. All kinds of arguments were used on both sides, but nobody dared or cared to speak of God or morality.

It is probably true that Christianity is the basis of all democracy, and that it is no accident that democratic forms of government have never appeared or been attempted outside the Christian tradition (the Greek city states were based on slavery, and excluded women from citizenship). The belief that every man ought to count for one and that nobody ought to count for more than one; the assumption that slavery is not only dangerous to a social order but also wicked; the mystical dogma of the equality of all men and women in the sight of the community, regardless of differences in intelligence, education, wisdom, physical strength, or moral character—regardless, that is to say, of differences in capacity to serve the community or in willingness to do so; the

principle that is expressed in "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" or in the equally indefinite and idealistic "From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need"; these can only be rescued from sentimentality and find a rational justification if human brotherhood and equality are rooted in some dogma as definite as that of the Fatherhood of God.

Unfortunately, democratic practice has increased *pari passu* with the decline in the corporate consciousness that our civilization and culture are rooted in Christianity. Democratic procedure by itself, with no transcendent background, means scepticism. The vote of the majority is the final court of appeal. What they believe is truth, and what they decide is good. It is assumed that if each man is free to seek his own interest the result will, in the long run, represent the general interest. If the publican votes for the "Trade" party, and the parson for the "anti-disestablishment" party, and so on, the result will express the general will, and bring about the general good! We count noses, regardless of what is in the heads behind the noses. *Vox populi, vox Dei*. But just because this democratic liberalism is essentially sceptical it has no convictions which can determine its actions in times of crisis; hence the general discredit into which democracy has fallen since the war. The future is not with those who agree with the majority but with those who have a belief and will fight for it and, if need be, die for it.

Dictators and would-be dictators, abroad and at home, say that democracy has been spoiled by self-seeking and party spirit and that the dictator will be public-spirited,

disinterested, and intellectually fearless. But no man is at once good enough and wise enough to have absolute power. The Christian doctrine of original sin does but state an irrefutable truth. All men are hell-deserving sinners and, in an ultimate sense, all are fools. And the reverse of the medal, another way of saying the same thing, is the mystical dogma of human equality.

The Christian view is that the human individual is of unique value. Did not God die for him? And on the political level, the expression of that uniqueness is freedom. It is wicked to place any man in such a position that all he has to do is to go when he is sent and to come when he is called. Dictatorship degrades the citizens of a state by depriving them of the power to think, will, and act for themselves. The philosophy implied in Christianity holds that man needs to be a member of a rational and moral community if he is to be what God made him to be. But dictatorship destroys any community by reducing it to the level of an ant-heap. A society built for freedom, on the other hand, is one in which spiritual personality can develop. Democracy, that is to say, takes all the risks of treating men as children of God; it encourages them to be that. It is only of a democracy, then, that it can be said, in the fullest meaning of the words, that civil society and the authority of the State are "ordained of God."

Cæsar must not take what belongs to God. The ultimate throne of man's spirit—the only absolute authority in the universe—belongs not to any temporal government, but to Perfect Goodness, to God Whose will is the law of man's being. When the State claims

to be literally omniscient and tries to make itself really totalitarian, it becomes both blasphemous and immoral. The Church must always assert the duty of the Christian to defy tyranny in the name of conscience, at whatever cost. Any government must be judged by its service to the highest spiritual interests of its citizens—and, indeed, of those of other states also ; for in these days no state lives to itself.

We seem to have come a long way from the democracy which counts noses and is so sceptical that it identifies truth and goodness with the whim of the majority. Democracy is, indeed, only tolerable so far as it saves itself from degenerating into mere mob rule by a jealous respect for human personality, and by a careful justice to minorities. It requires more of men than any other form of government. What it believes of man and requires of him really means that he is a child of God. Democracy is not Christianity ; but the revelation, in the Incarnation, of what God is and what man may be, which is the ultimate truth about the universe, is the only justification for believing that freedom is a desirable goal, and a practicable method, for human society. Only by the grace of God can we have such faith in common men as democracy requires, and only by the grace of God can common men justify that faith.

Not only the political life of man, but his economic life also, has been emancipated from the authority of God as well as from the rule of the Church. It is one of the supreme tragedies of history that the Industrial Revolution, which made possible machine industry and, therefore, the vast ramifications of large-scale joint-stock

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commerce and international finance, began in the eighteenth century, when the Christian religion was weaker, more generally discredited, than it has ever been before or since. It was with almost no effective protest from the representatives of Christ, and with little real understanding that such a protest ought to be made, that the maxim grew up, "Business is Business." That means, we will have no nonsense about the law of God or "What would Jesus do?"

This whole modern economic system is now a world-wide unity. It controls men's lives completely and is itself uncontrolled by any spiritual ideal. The breakdown of the system during the last few years, in many different parts of the world—not because of the scarcity of food and goods, but as a result of plenty—is evidence of the fact that the economic system is essentially meaningless. This can be expressed in several different ways. We can say, if we like, that goods have been produced to be sold, not to be consumed; on any Catholic philosophy of business, production must be for consumption, and consumption must serve the ends of the good life—must be for the glory of God. To make economic activity an end in itself is idolatry, in the essential meaning of the word. Or we can say that profit has been the motive force of the economic system, instead of the supply of human need; and the proof of that is that the system has broken down, not because human need has been satisfied—notoriously, it is not satisfied—but because it cannot be run at a profit. Or we can say that men are hungry in a world of plenty; man is treated as a means to an economic end and business is regarded

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as an end in itself, to be pursued for its own sake. There seems to be little agreement as to the cure for the paradoxical tragedy of the capitalist and industrial system. Men talk helplessly of "world economic forces," and just in so far as these seem to be almighty the good news of God's almighty love falls on deaf ears.

Rural life and agricultural work make it easy for a man to believe in God; they keep religion real and living by keeping it close to everyday experience. The dependence of the farmer on superhuman powers, on Nature and on whatever Being controls Nature, is forced upon his attention every day. He ploughs and sows. If he be up to date he studies the nature of soils and the chemical composition of manures. He does his best. And very soon he can do no more, but must wait until God giveth the increase. The sense of dependence, which is an integral part of the religious experience, is almost inescapable for the countryman. And it is equally true that in the rural community the duty to one's neighbour, which is "like unto," of the same order of importance as, one's duty to one's God, is obvious and immediate, and only to be avoided "of malice aforethought." It is no accident that Christianity maintains its hold longest in the country, neither can it be explained by the natural conservatism of the countryman, nor by his remoteness from books and new thought.

The townsman's life reminds him much less of God. His life is surrounded by, dependent on, social organization. A strike affects his food and comfort far more obviously than does bad weather or a poor harvest. Not Nature, but human nature, is the environment with



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which he has to deal. Electricity, chemistry, foreign trade, cold storage : these are the things which control for him the supply of the necessities of life. He comes to understand that whether he works and eats or is unemployed and goes without depends on a foreman's good temper, or an employer's incompetence, or a trade union leader's diplomacy, or the national traffic system, or the rate of exchange, or industrial conditions in another country, or another continent, or war and peace. But it is Man, always, on whom his welfare depends, and there is no obvious point at which God must be taken into account and will not be denied. At the same time, rather paradoxically as it may seem, his duty towards his neighbour becomes more difficult both to understand and to fulfil. A shareholder in a company has little share in the control of its behaviour, either towards its employees or its customers. A purchaser can know little of the conditions under which what he buys is produced or distributed. The Christian obligation of an individual in modern urban society is a little remote and not easy to realize.

This anti-religious effect of contemporary civilization becomes more intense as the industrial system becomes more completely mechanized. In a very real sense, machinery is the product of the scientific revolution. Without science it could not have been, and machinery makes mass-production possible. But machinery has mastered the spirit of man. What is euphemistically called "rationalization" is the carrying of this process to its logically inevitable conclusion. It means that the man who had been subservient to the machine is now

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becoming superfluous. In every industry machines are replacing human beings to a tragic extent. In the twenty years before 1925, machinery in the motor-car industry made it possible for three men to do the work of ten. A newly invented automatic machine for making electric-light bulbs can produce as many articles as two thousand men. And alongside the machine the mechanization of the worker (it is called "industrial psychology," "motion study," or "the scientific organization of industry") means fewer men, though it may mean better conditions.

The whole recent development of industry and commerce means that the human, personal element is being pushed into the background. The international organization of trade means that employment in England depends on conditions of work and wages in the Far East. The control of industry by "finance" means that increasingly large numbers of great industrial concerns are in the hands of the boards of controlling companies in London or some other financial centre, who know nothing of the men who manufacture what is sold, or the processes, or the factories, who perhaps do not even know where the factories are. Modern industry is itself becoming automatic, beyond the guidance of any individual or group of individuals, with no human meaning. Its total effect on their imaginations is to make the men who take part in it feel like cogs in a machine. It makes God and the soul seem only words.

This leads naturally to the consideration of the effect of modern science as an influence making for the dis-

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integration of religion. This goes much deeper than the irreconcilable descriptions of the universe given by science and by the first chapters of Genesis. To most people the conflict between "Moses" on the one hand, and Newton or Eddington and Darwin or Bateson on the other, has ceased to be a living issue. They accept the fact that the Bible is not intended to be a text-book of science, and that if the scientists can demonstrate a fact or principle which contradicts our interpretation of any part of the Bible, then that interpretation must be given up or modified. In the same way, the difference between religion and science goes much deeper than the contradiction between the attitude towards reality which finds a significant place for the miraculous and the supernatural, and that attitude which assumes the uniformity of nature and the universal validity of natural law. This is a more important point, however, because the insistence on miracles implies a more or less completely thought out recognition that they are a revelation of a personal and transcendent God, and of the Divine activity and freedom and initiative in the universe.

Science offers an impersonal description of the universe, but religion is concerned to proclaim the reality of personality in an apparently impersonal world. Science begins by ignoring mind as a real cause. No scientific text-book deals with personality. Astronomy and geology do not refer anything that has happened to God as its cause. None of the sciences mentions the desires of men or animals as the explanation of any event in the external world. Psychology, even, tries to describe the inner life without taking will or freedom

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into account. This may be all as it should be so long as it is recognized that science describes only a part of experience, and that what it ignores comprises all that is most important in human life. The trouble comes when people make science a substitute for religion or philosophy, a rival religion and a philosophy which explains the whole of experience.

The prestige of science is due to the great service it has rendered to the community, and to the very much greater service we may expect it to render in the future. And it appeals to much that is finest in man. Its story is a record of men who have sacrificed many of the things which ordinary men find desirable—even life itself—to advance human knowledge. What is called “the scientific spirit” is a very valuable thing. It implies a real inner humility, a readiness to sit at the feet of the facts and learn from them; a certain disinterestedness, also, a determination not that my theory shall prevail, but that it shall be tested; disinterestedness, too, in the sense that the reward of the scientist has been, not comfort, still less wealth, sometimes not even prestige, but only the sense that his work is honestly done. It means the habit of testing evidence—critical, questioning, tentative, the love of truth above all else.

The impersonal interpretation of the universe which science offers, when it is accepted as an adequate philosophy, rules out all possibility of the influence of mind on matter. It means that prayer, freedom, morality, as well as miracle, are ruled out as meaningless. The practical results of science, also, have proved destructive of personality. It is science, as we have

said, which makes mass-production possible. There has been much discussion of the evil effects of mass-production on the producer, but it is not so generally recognized that mass-production may do definite harm to the consumers, by standardizing their minds and their lives.

It is claimed that along many different lines of evidence natural science, by depreciating the value of personality, has made it impossibly difficult to imagine that the Christian scheme of things can be true. The great Galileo-Newton-Darwin-Freud-Einstein synthesis, it is alleged, makes it impossible to believe that man and his desires and ideals, his fall and his redemption, are of such central, fundamental, and unique importance in the universe as historical Christianity teaches. The earth, as the late Lord Balfour expressed it, is a third-rate planet attached to an insignificant star. It is an invisible speck in a sidereal system which is only one among an inconceivably vast number of giant nebulae which are, perhaps, rushing away from each other at enormous velocities. From a mathematical point of view, a planetary system seems to be an improbable accident. And the conditions which, coinciding, made life, as we know it, possible on the earth, might not have happened. The universe is about ten million million years old, but it was less than one hundred thousand years ago that the first man appeared on the earth. He was a descendant of the amoeba and the sponge, merely one among the higher primates, cousin to the gibbon, the chimpanzee, and the ourang-outang. It is not easy to believe that for such a being, and for his salvation, the

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Creator of the universe became Man on this earth. It is difficult to believe that man means so much in the universe.

Man is one of the animals, and all his characteristics—what, in our conceit, we are apt to think of as his excellencies—are no more than peculiarities. Their significance, if they have any significance, is that they are useful in the struggle for existence. The giraffe's neck, the webbed foot of the duck, the tiger's claws and teeth, man's "all subtilizing intellect," are all alike; they are "on all fours," as we say. They are tools for winning a living from Nature or weapons of attack or defence for conflict with other animals. Man's mind must be judged, not by its capacity for discovering truth—it was not evolved for that—but by its *survival value*. Man with his mind is more than a match for the hippopotamus, the lion, the shark, and the eagle. He is able to exist on the earth under a greater variety of natural conditions than can any other animal. That, and that alone, is the mark of his pre-eminence.

Mr. Krutch has stated very pithily the low view of human nature which is, in fact, associated with modern science.

"Socrates and Plato and Augustine," he says, "did not invent stoves or improve lamps because it never occurred to them that it was particularly worth while to do so. They held certain views concerning human possibilities and those views implied certain problems whose solution was of pressing importance. It was unthinkable that any mind of the first order should concern itself with mere mechanical ingenuity, and it did not become thinkable until certain high views concerning human dignity and importance had been reluctantly abandoned. . . . Bacon claimed all nature as the province

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of his species, but he renounced at the same time everything which is not included in that apparently comprehensive realm, and in so doing he confined the human spirit within limits so narrow that Socrates or Plato or Augustine or Aquinas would have found them suffocating. . . . Forbidding man to seek God, he gave him in exchange full permission to invent as many lamps and stoves as his ingenuity would desire."

Man, then, is one of the animals, and his intellect, his sense of beauty, his ethical standards and sanctions, his exalted emotions and ideals, must be judged on that level. Take love, for example: the tender emotion connected with the relation between the sexes. During the last third of the nineteenth century natural science began to inspire a revolt against the conventional standards of morality in relation to love and marriage. Grant Allen's *Woman Who Did* is an example of what I mean. This was done largely in the interests of a romantic ideal of love. "Free Love" was the slogan of a beautiful because natural ideal for human life. That romantic, Victorian ideal of love is described with some force in the *Conquest of Happiness*, by that eminent Victorian, Mr. Bertrand Russell. "Love is to be valued," he says, "because it enhances all the best pleasures, such as music, and sunrise in mountains, and the sea under a full moon. A man who has never enjoyed beautiful things in the company of a woman he loved has not experienced to the full the magic power of which such things are capable." Later on he says, "To be unable to inspire sex love is a great misfortune to any man or woman, since it deprives him or her of the greatest joys that life has to offer." And in another

place in the same book : " The only sex relations which have real value are those in which there is no reticence and in which the whole personality of both becomes merged in a new collective personality."

To a large extent the fight for freedom in relations between the sexes has been won. The old " taboos," as they are called, are increasingly ignored. The widespread knowledge of the use of mechanical contraceptives has, as a natural outcome, the claim that a person's sexual experience is his or her own affair. What I do is my own concern, no business of Church or State or Society or Family, so long as I am not injuring another. A man's sexual adventures are his own affair, so long as he does not seduce a young girl, or beget children, or spread disease. And the same thing is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of a woman's sexual adventures. I quote from a letter written by Mr. Bertrand Russell. " The state and the law should take no notice of sexual relations apart from children, and no marriage ceremony should be valid unless accompanied by a medical certificate of the woman's pregnancy." And the tragic irony of the progress of events is that the same philosophy which has taught men and women that there should be no restrictions on sexual experience, so that men and women should be as free to go to bed together as they are to dine together, now tells them that this sexual experience—this love—means nothing at all. It is no more than a matter of glands. Modern people have made love a banner and a slogan, a thing to fight for, the supreme value in life. Because industrial



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and social life seemed to be controlled by world economic forces which no man, or group of men, had the knowledge or power to modify, because politics seem increasingly futile and meaningless, and social service nothing better than ambulance work for the victims of capitalism, therefore the youth of the post-War world turned their attention to sex. They discussed its problems and claimed complete freedom of self-expression with regard to it. And then they discover, and their prophets and teachers put their discoveries into novels and plays, that sex in itself is neither beautiful nor noble nor satisfying. It is a mere matter of physiology.

The Church had said that sexual experience is essentially sacramental, the outward and visible symbol and instrument of a love which is personal and spiritual. And therefore the Church had fenced round this experience with awful religious and social sanctions and restrictions. The moderns have rejected the restrictions and denied the sacramental character of the experience which was the meaning of the restrictions, and claimed to enjoy the experience when they like and how they like. And they find that the experience no longer has any value for them. Sex in itself is a snare and a delusion. I think it probable, indeed, that they may discover that they cannot, as a matter of fact, isolate the sex experience; that unrestricted, promiscuous, "mere" sex will have its results in distracted personalities and divided selves—just because men and women are animals *and something more*. But, ignoring that for the moment, I insist that in eliminating the spiritual,

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supernatural factor in sex experience the typically modern people have taken all the value out of that experience, even for themselves.

I have spent so much time on sex, not because I am specially interested in it—I am not ; I think that modern thought has attributed a quite exaggerated importance to it—, but because I think that what has happened in the transvaluation of sex in our time is typical of what must happen to the whole of man's moral life if he accepts the description of himself which naturalism offers. There can be no rational basis for any morality—for the judgment that some persons and purposes are good and that others are evil, and that some actions are right and others are wrong—apart from the supernatural, other-worldly, absolute estimate of man which rests upon the dogmas of revealed religion.

I do not say that all atheists and believers in a naturalistic philosophy are non-moral. But I say that they have no rational ground for the moral standards they accept. Let us question them. Does evolution provide a valid standard by which conduct shall be judged ? Mr. Krutch, indeed, says that when Darwin proclaimed his theory of the descent of man he forged a link between zoology and ethics. But there has been a good deal of confusion of thought on this point. The Darwinian slogan, "the survival of the fittest," was thought to make it possible to give a biological content to words like good and evil, right and wrong. All we had to do was to examine the process of evolution, to discover what kinds of creatures survive, and what qualities help them to survive. They are the fittest, the good. And

the conduct which helps forward the process of evolution is right, and that which hinders it is wrong. Could anything be simpler?

So you get Bernhardt preaching the gospel of force—brute strength—and the Bishop of Birmingham discussing the ways in which the unfit should be eliminated. Hospitals, asylums, convalescent homes, and such things, are immoral, because they mean the keeping alive of those who would be exterminated in the struggle for existence. They mean that you slow up the process of evolution and lower the average quality of the race. War is a good thing, because it means the survival of the fittest. In general, evolutionary ethics teaches that you must support the strong and successful because it is strong and successful, and crush the weak because it is weak.

But it is all due to a pure misunderstanding. The “survival of the fittest” does not mean “the survival of the best”; it is not the survival of those who are fittest to survive. All it means is “the survival of those who best fit a particular environment.” Natural selection, assuming it to be an actual principle of nature’s working, gives no guarantee at all of the quality of the result of evolution. In one environment, one sort of organism will survive, because there it is fittest; in another environment, another sort of organism will survive. The kind of creature that will be fittest to survive in the House of the Sacred Mission at Kelham will be different from that which will survive in the gaming rooms at Monte Carlo: at least, I hope so. To each environment its own fittest. So the “survival

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of the fittest" gives no standard for distinguishing  
good from evil.

It is also true that within a purely naturalistic scheme the conception of *progress* does not provide a rational moral standard. It is suggested that that is good which makes for progress, and that what hinders progress is bad. But progress in what direction? Whither? To what goal? Presumably your goal itself will be good. And you will either have two different definitions of good, or you will be arguing in a circle. In practice, however, those who believe in progress think that the mere passage of time makes things better. "Modern" or "up-to-date" means "good," and "mediaeval" is a term of abuse. Those who think in this way exhort us to sacrifice ourselves for the good of posterity. The Golden Age and the Superman are always on before. So you get a rational basis, they think, for a morality of self-control and self-sacrifice. We should all live to leave the world a little better than we found it, and to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before.

What are the facts? We must ignore, of course, any "other-worldly" considerations, any belief in a future life. We are arguing on the assumption that man is an animal, and that nature is all that is. The most certain of all the natural laws, Eddington tells us, is the law of the increase of entropy. The energy of the universe is, it is assumed, constant in amount, but it is becoming increasingly unavailable. There will come a time at last when none of it can be used. It will no longer be possible to do any work, to produce

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any change, in any part of the universe. Throughout all its vast expanse it will be still, silent, dead. Everything will have become as though it had not been.

Long before that happens, however, this planet on which we live will have ceased to be capable of maintaining life. However great the future achievements of culture and civilization may be, the struggle between man and his environment will become—slowly, gradually, but inevitably—a losing battle. The earth will enter a complete and final ice-age. The temperature will become lower and lower. The life of man will become increasingly mean, miserable, brutish, and short. At last, the last human being will live out his short life and die. And the human race and all its achievements—Homer and Dante and Shakespeare, Plato and Spinoza and Kant, Aristotle and Archimedes and Newton and Einstein, Buddha and Zoroaster and Jesus—all these will be as though they had not been. When you ask me to sacrifice myself to posterity, when you put that as a moral standard to encourage men to live the heroic and selfless life, you are really asking me to sacrifice myself for that last wretched creature whose life, by any intelligible standard, will be worth less than mine. You are asking one animal to sacrifice itself for another, whom it will never see, never know. Why should it do any such thing? The scientific description of the future, of the inevitable extermination of every living creature on the earth, makes progress as an ideal less than the vanishing shadow of an empty dream.

There have been people who have tried to build a

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rational system of ethics on "the greatest good of the greatest number." But it is clear that that is possible only if you have some intelligible distinction between man and the animals. It is no accident that eccentric exaggerations like anti-vivisection thrive as faith in dogmatic religion wanes. It is a commonplace that the brotherhood of man is not even a platitude, it is merely meaningless, apart from faith in the Fatherhood of God. Naturalism does not lift the animals to the human level, it reduces man to the animal level. He becomes one of the higher primates, and nothing more. And there is no sufficient reason why I should sacrifice either myself or a rabbit or a sheep to secure the greatest good of so unimportant an organism as man.

And what can naturalism mean by the greatest good? It can make no valid distinction, on its own premises, between higher and lower, or among spiritual, mental, and physical. Poetry and shove-halfpenny, a noble character and the taste of mushrooms, liberty and a jazz-band, are all alike "good" in exactly the same sense of the word; they are good because some people like them and will give money or time or thought or effort to obtain them. Some like shove-halfpenny more than poetry, and their conduct will develop accordingly. It is all a matter of subjective preference, and then of habit, and then, as man is a gregarious animal, it becomes a matter of social custom. "Custom has provided the only basis that ethics has ever had," says Mr. Krutch, "and there is no conceivable human action which custom has not at one time justified and at another condemned. Standards are imaginary things." And

on a later page of the same book he describes Westermarck, having adopted the genetic methods consecrated by Darwin, plunging

“into the study of morals. We eagerly await the exact and positive conclusions which science seems to promise, and he returns with three fat volumes which prove—that morality does not exist . . . no evidence of the existence of any such thing as morality except custom,—more or less fixed in certain times and places, but in the large extremely variable—which familiarity leads us to regard as absolute. And yet we act and must act as though these things were realities.”

The sad fact is that the moral law has authority for man only so long as it seems to him to deserve that authority. Persuade him that morality is only custom, that “thou shalt not kill” is not the will of God, but only tribal expediency, that “thou shalt not commit adultery” is an irrational taboo, that “thou shalt not steal” is no more than a trick of the “haves” to scare the “have nots,” and he will not any longer respect these commandments. What morality will you put in the place of the conventional codes that you reject, if your naturalistic philosophy says that no standard is more than relative? There can be no life worth living without some sanctions and standards, and the scientists, in explaining such things, have explained them all away. Society faces the abyss of anarchy, and the individual can hardly save himself from the intolerable nightmare that he is a being who has thought himself moral in a world where morality means nothing. We have lost our illusion. In *A Preface to Morals*, Mr. Walter Lippmann draws a moving picture of the modern man, finding it impossible any longer to believe in traditional

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religion, neither defiant nor indifferent but perplexed  
by the consequences of his unbelief.

“Having lost their faith, they have lost the certainty that their lives are significant, and that it matters what they do with their lives. . . . They know of no compelling reason which certifies the moral code they adhere to . . . their own preferences seem to have no sure foundation of any kind. They . . . ask whether the modern man possesses any criterion by which he can measure the value of his own desires, whether there is any standard he really believes in which permits him to put a term upon the pursuit of money, of power, and of excitement which has created so much of the turmoil and the squalor and the explosiveness of modern civilization. The modern man . . . may be busy with many things, but he discovers one day that he is no longer sure that they are worth doing. He has been much preoccupied but he is no longer sure he knows why. He has become involved in an elaborate routine of pleasures ; and they do not seem to amuse him very much. He finds it hard to believe that doing any one thing is better than doing any other thing, or, in fact, that it is better than doing nothing at all.”

What follows from all this ? The modern man has accepted, almost without realizing what it means or why he accepts it, a view of man and of his place in the world which makes it impossible for him to believe that life has any meaning or purpose. There is no such thing, then, as *the good* life. It is all a matter of taste. One kind of life is good for you, and another kind of life is good for me. If it is your nature to be a hermit, then be a hermit with all your might. If you find satisfaction in being a social worker, then that is the life for you. If nature intended you for a scientist, then in the observatory or the dissecting room you will find your *summum bonum*. And if you have the soul of



a Don Juan, well, let your eye wander where it will ; sip the honey from ladies' lips, and be ready to pay the price for it. Mr. Krutch puts it quite plainly.

"There is no more any such thing as *the* good life than there is any such thing as *the* good picture. . . . In art all styles are good provided that they are consistent and harmonious within themselves. There is the style of Benvenuto Cellini and there is the ' style ' of St. Francis of Assisi, both of whom led successful lives because each of them lived in accordance with the law of his being. . . . The life lived by the great monster is as truly the good life as that lived by the great saint . . . life being an art and not a science, we may become either Cellini or St. Francis ; but if that is true we may also become Napoleon or the Marquis de Sade."

The best illustration of this that I know in modern literature is Mr. Ernest Hemingway's almost incredible book on bull-fighting, *Death in the Afternoon*. The author admits that from the Christian point of view the bull-fight is indefensible. "There is certainly much cruelty, there is always danger, either sought or unlooked-for, and there is always death." It is not a sport, in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the word. There is no pretence that it is a fair or equal contest between the man and the bull. If it were, the man would lose. Mr. Hemingway regards it purely as an æsthetic experience.

"It is a tragedy ; the death of the bull, which is played, more or less well, by the bull and the man involved, and in which there is danger for the man but certain death for the animal. So far, about morals, I know that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after, and judged by these moral standards, which I do not defend, the bull-fight is very moral to me because I feel

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very fine while it is going on and have a feeling of life and death and mortality and immortality, and after it is over I feel very sad but very fine. Also, I do not mind the horses, not in principle, but in fact I do not mind them."

Elsewhere he says :

"A great killer must love to kill ; unless he feels it is the best thing he can do, unless he is conscious of its dignity and feels that it is its own reward, he will be incapable of the abnegation that is necessary in real killing. The truly great killer must have a sense of honour and a sense of glory . . . he must take pleasure in it not merely as a trick of wrist, eye, and managing of his left hand . . . but he must have a spiritual enjoyment of the moment of killing. Killing cleanly, and in a way which gives you æsthetic pleasure and pride, has always been one of the greatest enjoyments of a part of the human race. One of its greatest pleasures . . . is the feeling of rebellion against death which comes from its administering. Once you accept the rule of death thou shalt not kill is an easily and naturally obeyed commandment. But when a man is still in rebellion against death he has pleasure in taking to himself one of the Godlike attributes, that of giving it. . . . These things are done in pride, and, of course, pride is a Christian sin, and a pagan virtue. But it is pride which makes the bull-fight, and true enjoyment of killing which makes the great matador."

I find it difficult to resist the conviction that there is a certain amount of humbug about that passage. He is trying to make the Protestant Anglo-Saxon flesh creep. Nevertheless, that is where naturalism and unbelief lead to, in the logical issue. Mr. Hemingway boasts that he has seen over fifteen hundred bulls killed. What is more, he is not ashamed to tell of how he has seen bull-fighters gored in the chest, has heard the ribs crack, literally, with the shock, and seen a man turn on

of a supernatural morality : in other words, to prove that man is more than a part of nature, that he is, in fact, a spiritual being to be treated as an end in himself, as a child of God. We have to give the reasons, in the light of modern naturalism, for our belief in Christianity and in the Christian way of life.

I defend my belief in God and the supernatural on the ground that the description of things presented by modern science suggests such a belief. The beginning of the process of nature, so far as science can consider a beginning, was fire-mist extending, not quite uniformly, in an imperfectly stable equilibrium, throughout space-time. Science describes, with a certain amount of speculation, the formation of the giant nebulae, of the stars, of the solar system, of the earth ; the physical conditions on the earth's surface without which life, as we know it, could not have appeared ; the appearance of life, the evolution of man, the glorious achievements, the tragic failures, of human history.

The beginning of the process was fire-mist in space-time, the end (up to the present) is the mind and spirit of man—analytical intellect, the appreciation of beauty and the power to create it, and the life of charity. There is a complete discontinuity between the beginning of that process and the end. You cannot explain the goal in terms of the starting-point, because they do not belong to the same universe of discourse. It would be absurd to say that fire-mist in space-time is the cause of the sainthood of Francis or the philosophy of Plato ; such a statement would be mere gibberish. To begin with fire-mist and end with spirit is a miracle, and it

does not become less impossible to understand because you divide it into a million little miracles. The process of evolution as it has actually taken place, the passage from matter to spirit, from the lower to the higher, means the presence, from the beginning, of Creative Spirit at least as high in the standard of values as the highest that has appeared in the process.

The second point that I make is that there are definite, recognizable breaches of continuity in the history of the universe and man, as science describes it. It happened that conditions on the earth became favourable to the maintenance of life, and it happened that life appeared. For the last two generations scientists have been assuming that the gulf between the inorganic and the organic was about to be closed. It was growing narrower and narrower, and we should open *The Times* one morning to read that some biological chemist has demonstrated how life first appeared on the earth. Science now recognizes, however, that the discontinuity is real, and may be permanent. At the Annual Meetings of the British Association in 1933, two Presidential addresses emphasized the fact that there is not only no evidence for an easy belief in continuous evolution, but that the facts point the other way. There is a deep, unbridged gulf between the living and the non-living. Science does not know how life began. Sir Frederick Hopkins said: "Though speculations concerning the origin of life have given intellectual pleasure to many, all that we yet know about it is that we know nothing." And Dr. Gray was even more bold when he said: "The belief in the spontaneous origin of living matter seems to be

a negation of the principles which underlie scientific thought. . . . The biologist must accept the living state as he finds it, and not allow his science to rest on theories, however spectacular and attractive."

It is almost the first assumption of any modern philosophy that science knows nothing, and can know nothing, of miracles. But I do not know what these gentlemen meant unless they meant that the beginning of life on this planet was a miracle. "Life's advent was at once the most improbable and the most significant event in the history of the universe," said Sir Frederick Hopkins. But that is almost the definition of a miracle—a very improbable event which has very great significance. But Dr. Gray even went so far as to use the word "miracle." He is so deeply impressed by the absolute difference between living and non-living matter that for him the passage from one to the other cannot be described in terms of laws. If it actually occurred, it belongs not to "natural" events, but to "miracles."

Another discontinuity which actually exists is that between mind and body. There is an unbridged gulf between physiology and its description of nerves and glands, and psychology, with its descriptions of thoughts and emotions and volitions. I am directly aware of my own sensations and thoughts, but I cannot be aware of my nerves and glands as such. It might seem unnecessary to call attention to the reality of minds and their place in the universe, for scientists experiment and argue and write books, and their minds have something to do with this behaviour, one would imagine. But natural

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science, as a system—especially in its pre-Einstein form—is concerned to rule our minds from its consideration. It will make it impossible to describe the physical world by sets of equations, if the activity of mind has to be taken into account. But the question has to be faced : Is mind a true cause ? Do minds make a difference to the course of events ? Do things happen which would not happen, or would happen differently, but for the existence of minds ?

Let us question the evolutionist, the thorough-going Darwinian, if there are any such left. Why are there any minds ? How were they “evolved” ? As we have seen already, the biological account of the matter is that minds were developed because they had survival value ; a creature with intelligence, with reasoning powers, able to remember the past and to plan for the future, is more than a match for creatures whose chief weapons of offence and defence are ferocity or speed or strength. But if mind is useful it must be a true cause, it must make a difference in the external world. It is clear, then, although this is not always recognized, that the theory of evolution is inconsistent with any doctrine of pure materialism or mechanism.

The crucial point is the real existence of minds as true causes in the actual world. Hume pointed out long ago that there can be nothing more miraculous, more completely supernatural, than that when I will to raise my hand, my hand is raised. If man is free to initiate changes in the world, to do particular things, there is nothing essentially absurd in the notion that God acts to achieve particular objects. The theist may interpret

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the uniformity of nature as meaning that in ordinary and usual situations God acts in the ordinary and usual way ; similar causes have similar effects. But the same principle means that the unique cause has unique effects ; which is another way of saying that in unusual circumstances, to meet the special needs of His creatures, God acts in an unusual way.

I take it, then, that on the ground of an acceptance of the results of science as valid, within its own limits and for its own purposes, we can claim the right to discuss such problems as prayer and miracle and immortality in the light of our general religious philosophy, undaunted by any fear that science forecloses the discussion.

Science does not make belief in God irrational. But we must go further than that, we must justify the belief that God reveals Himself to men. There is a good *prima facie* case for believing in a particular revelation. Mankind owes nearly all that it knows (or thinks it knows) of God—of His nature and attributes, as well as of His existence—to one narrow historical tradition. If we had lost the Bible, and the memory of what is recorded there—the progressive revelation of God through Israel leading up to the life of Jesus—and all that has come out of that ; if humanity had lost that, but had kept Plato, Buddha, Zoroaster (even him !), then our lot would be dark indeed. But if these others had been lost and forgotten, and we had nevertheless the Prophets and the Old Testament generally, the Gospels and Epistles, and the Spirit-filled Body of Christ, then not only we of the Western world but also

humanity as a whole would hardly miss these others, so far as the knowledge of God is concerned, and insight into the meaning of destiny, and conviction of the worthwhileness of life.

But this comparative narrowness of the theistic tradition in history becomes even more significant, as pointing to a possible Divine revelation, when it is considered in conjunction with another characteristic of the Hebrew prophetic tradition. The Hebrews were at an unusually low level of culture and civilization. Excavations show that when they came into a country, civilized achievement degenerated: tools, buildings, pottery, all show it. When they were established, they were more backward than their neighbours. And it is against this context, in this environment of stagnant mental life, that there is set the remarkable succession of great reformers, pioneers, poets, whom we call the Prophets. The uniqueness, consistency, and permanent value of their contribution to universal human culture, in contrast with their background, justifies us in calling them a miraculous succession.

The ordinary man's certainty of the existence of other minds than his own—and not even Mr. Aldous Huxley would argue unless he knew that there is someone with whom to argue—has never been explained except in ways that imply that in social experience other minds are active in revealing themselves to us. Similarly, religious experience means a communion of Spirit with spirit. The belief in revelation is another way of stating the conviction that there is a God, that He is active in nature and, particularly, in human history, and that He makes



Himself known in human experience. It is of the essence of spirit to be active, to express itself, to reveal itself. The claim that religion rests on revelation is a claim that experience in general, and religious experience in particular, is not entirely a delusion, and that in it there is actual intercourse with a God who is present and active.

Revelation, then, is not primarily the imparting of information about God, but the activity of God Himself. That is why it is recorded in terms of the knowledge, civilization, culture, and moral standards, of those to whom the revelation comes. And it meets the common, superficial objection that revelation must provide information which reasoning and experience could have discovered for themselves, or which, being super-rational, reasoning and ordinary experience could not attain but can test and confirm, or which, being irrational, cannot be related, in one system, to the findings of reason and experience. God reveals, not information, but Himself. Revelation is the name for the element of first-hand experience in religion, the given element, the activity of God.

Hebrew prophecy began with Moses, a dim, gigantic, prehistoric figure. It seems very probable that it was he who impressed on Hebrew religion the conviction that there can be no image of God, a conviction which made possible a developing, and not merely a static, revelation of the Divine. To this early period, also, belongs the principle that the bond between Jehovah and His people is not merely natural, but moral—that He has chosen them. And the complement of this is

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the declaration that Jehovah is a jealous God. The Hebrews were monolatrous—any worship of other gods was disloyalty. Alone among the peoples of the ancient world they took religion seriously. In the third century before Christ they gave martyrs for their faith: a unique thing. That element of bigotry, which the Christians inherited from the Jews, saved the Hebrew-Christian tradition from being swamped by nature-worship, non-moral and sometimes worse.

The developing revelation within Hebrew prophecy always inspired, and went before—never merely reflected and followed—the moral and intellectual growth of the nation. In Micah, Jeremiah and the second Isaiah it reaches a faith which deserves to be universal, the revelation of a God Who is the meaning of all existence, the highest Good, Controller of the lives of men, in Whose hands the nations and empires of the world are instruments to do His will. As they learned to recognize reason and righteousness as the symbols of Jehovah, they came to see that He Whom their fathers had worshipped as the God of the tribes of Israel is the God of all the earth, the Almighty Creator of all things.

This faith was confirmed in the Incarnation. The God Who is more perfect than man's highest conceiving, Whose Love is more generous and strong and limitless than he had dared to hope, expressed Himself completely and finally, was finally revealed, in a life which meant nothing at all but the redemption of man, a life which was given for men that they might live by it. It cannot be demonstrated that Jesus was incarnate God

by any logically coercive proof. But there is in His life a new revelation of a goodness so strong and loving, so sane and beautiful, that man has never been able to conceive anything, not to speak of achieving anything, to put beside Him. If He be God, then omnipotence and omniscience, wisdom and justice and eternity, must be interpreted in the most personal fashion, in terms of perfect love. If He be God, then His life and death and resurrection, interpreting and interpreted by His marvellous words, are the clue to the mystery of evolution and the tragedy of human history. Evolution means the patience of God, and history means His boundless love. For all time, for non-Christians and agnostics as well as for Christians, the essential content of the word "God" is defined by what Jesus was and did and said and suffered. Either Jesus Christ is God, or there is no God.

The Incarnation is the guarantee and protection of all religion, Christian and non-Christian alike. Without it, faith has no security against degenerating into a risky and uncertain speculation. Increasingly, all genuine religion, without as well as within the bounds of Christendom, comes to mean faith in God, personal and good: the practice of prayer: the hope of immortality: and the actual reality of the supernatural, without which, as we have seen, all human standards become merely relative and subjective, and human life loses its dignity and value. It is clear that natural science does not, in itself, make such religion irrational. But it makes it difficult to imagine, unless the Incarnation actually happened. In that case the human spirit can find a home in the super-

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natural world. It is the supreme miracle which reveals the eternal meaning of time and evolution and history. But if not, man can hope and guess, but that is all. His faith may be true, but the prestige of natural knowledge makes it difficult to believe.

With all other religious persons I share the conviction that a worthy human life can only be lived in submission to, and by the help of, God. And with those who profess and call themselves Christians I believe that God, almighty and transcendent, the Creator of the material and spiritual universe, has revealed Himself to redeem mankind in the life, teaching, suffering, and triumph of His Son Jesus Christ, through Whom the Holy Spirit is given without measure to the Society of those who believe on Him. The goal of life is union with God in Christ, and that also is the way to the goal.

Religion and life are, fundamentally, concerns of man as a social being rather than as a mere individual. Whitehead defines religion as "what the individual does with his own solitariness," and William James, in his classical work on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, leaving out the institutional entirely, defined religion in relation to individual men in their solitude. But man is social; not the individual but society is logically primary. In the most secret recesses of his inner being he is what he is in dependence on his environment. His whole personality is dyed in the influence of the race, nation, church, class, college, school, family, city, club to which he belongs. That last word is chosen deliberately.

This does not mean that Christianity is merely a matter

of custom and convention, and not of personal conviction. But it does mean that the individual is organic to humanity. So far as his behaviour expresses not merely his whims, views, tastes, but the deep convictions—the faith—which the soul has tested in the stress of life itself, so far will what is expressed be, not merely individual, but fundamentally human. This is what Tolstoi meant when he said that the greatest art makes its appeal to “the farm labourer”: not to every actual farm labourer, for they may be as insincere, superficial, merely human, as anybody else, but to the unsophisticated man, fundamentally normal, in touch with nature and the great mysteries of birth and death; the man of whom the Lord was thinking when He thanked His Father that He had hidden “these things” from the clever and the learned and had revealed them to the simple-minded. Religion is not a specialist matter, for those who have a taste for piety or are particularly susceptible to the numinous, but it is for man as man.

It follows that the Church is an essential part, not only of the method, but also of the ideal of true religion. The faith of the charcoal-burner is part of the authority for Christian theology. The individual’s apprehension of the things necessary for salvation will be conditioned by his particular narrow place in society and history, relative to his partial experience and inadequate education, “eccentric” in the true meaning of the word, unless it is corrected and enriched by contact with, nay, by immersion in, the stream of heroic faith in God and goodness which has not only inspired and absorbed all

that was richest in European life and culture, but has been the strength and vision and comfort of lives lived for God. The standard of spiritual truth can be nothing narrower than—*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. Each Christian must aim at believing and praying as the Catholic Church does.

This is the importance of tradition. Trotter, in his *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, says that truth is what the herd has not succeeded in casting out. There are certain great revelations, intuitions, discoveries—the great dogmas of the Catholic creed, for example—which have proved their truth by their survival value. Believing them, men of very different kinds, of different nationalities and classes, with widely different kinds of education and experience, have been saved from sin, have conquered their temptations, have been strengthened to serve the brotherhood. The impatient modern man may despise as intellectual fetters what have proved themselves the bulwarks of human freedom. Theology and religion are rightly conservative, for there is much that is supremely worth conserving in the historical teaching, devotion, and discipline of the Church. It may be that some who are eager to “restate the old faith in terms of modern thought” really succeed in stating a different faith in deference to modern thought. There is much talk of putting the old wine into new bottles—but sometimes it seems to lose much of its quality in the decanting. The Germans have a proverb, which is at least as old as Luther, that you should not empty out the baby with the bath-water. To see how that applies is to recognize that the word “orthodox”—which is almost a term of

abuse on the lips of some "modern" people—describes something very precious indeed.

There are two conceptions of life and religion and education. The typically modern view is that each individual is to make the most of himself. So education is competitive in its method, and the pupil is rewarded for being at the top of his class. The political ideal is liberty. The virtues which men admire are independence, self-reliance, and initiative. In religion, one must try to think for oneself, and not accept conventional beliefs uncriticized. The other view looks on man as a member of society. Education consists in being a member of a school or college or university, and learning to live in a community. The aim in politics is to help each man to fulfil the duties of his station: not rights, but duties, are fundamental. And the virtues which are most admired are loyalty and obedience. The words which this view of life brings into religion are revelation and authority. The duchess and the dustman's daughter are both children of God, and will be judged at last by perfectly wise Love according to the use they have made of their opportunities in their station of life.

The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate:  
God made them high or lowly,  
And ordered their estate.

And the two views can hardly be reconciled.

The man who holds the organic view of human society believes in obedience, although he may not always succeed in practising it. Obedience is due, for example, to the Bishop, as the organ of God's will in

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the Church. (If you ask, why the Bishop, rather than any other organ?—the answer is largely historical, and this is not the place, and I have not the knowledge, to deal with it.) The important matter, from the point of view of principle, is that there should be some authority, and some obedience. On the one hand, obedience means that a man does what he is ordered, when he does not like it, when he does not agree with it, even when he is not convinced that it is right. On the other hand, however, this does not mean that Christian obedience ought to be absolute and unquestioning, like military obedience or that of the Jesuits. The ultimate authority for the Christian man is his conscience—fallible, warped by ignorance and sin—but in the last resort, when he has done his best, by attending to all those influences whose authority he ought to heed, to enlighten his conscience, it is for him the final organ of the will of God. And if he is quite certain that his conscience condemns a certain action as wrong he must not do it, however much his bishop may order it. But it is the clear duty of the Christian man to obey the Church always, in all cases where there is any doubt, unless his conscience quite clearly says “no.”

This does not mean that ecclesiastical authority has been always right—that popes and cardinals and bishops and convocations have never said foolish things and never done wicked ones. Authority and infallibility are not the same, and obedience to authority is justified, apart from any assumption about infallibility. Humanity is much more likely to be right than any man, and the experience of the Church is wider, longer, and richer



than the experience of any Christian. And there is certainly a Providence which over-rules for good even the blunders of Catholic authority. St. Joan of Arc was condemned by an ecclesiastical court; as Mr. Bernard Shaw has said, "It is not easy for mortal eyes to distinguish between the heretic and the saint." But, in the long run, St. Joan did more for the causes she held dear by dying for them than by fighting for them. John Henry Newman spent most of twenty years "under a cloud," suspected of heresy, hampered by authority, all his schemes for serving the Church made little of. To-day his influence is increasing all over the world, in all Christian societies. And nobody thinks that it would have been one whit greater or more effective if he had been patted on the back, instead of being opposed, by little-souled men in high positions.

The next great characteristic of historical Christianity is one which it shares with powerful tendencies in modern psychology and philosophy, as well as with many thinkers in the ancient world. In psychology it appears as the principle that human nature is a unity, the mind is the body in action, so that it is impossible to draw a clear-cut distinction between "life" and "mind," or between "body" and "spirit." In philosophy it is seen not only in the whole theory of emergence associated with the names of Professors Alexander and Lloyd Morgan, but in the realism which the Archbishop of York has built on the foundations they have laid. Reality, according to this view, appears at four levels—matter, life, mind, and spirit. It is true of each of these levels that it can only appear in dependence on that which

is beneath it, while, on the other hand, its full meaning and purpose become clear in relation to the level above it. Life depends on matter for its manifestation, but it finds its meaning, its *raison d'être*, in mind. It is obvious that this tendency in philosophy has affinities with the behaviourist elements in psychology. And they both have a certain resemblance to the habit of ancient thinkers of identifying, in some sense, a symbol with what it signifies, a god with his statue, for example, and a sacrament with the grace of which it is the effectual sign.

Catholic Christianity, in its characteristic temper, is opposed to a clear-cut division between spirit and body, between natural and supernatural. It denies the false spirituality which is identified in popular speech with Puritanism, with more or less of injustice to the actual Puritans. Spirit is expressed in its contact with, and control of, the material. To make one's spiritual life independent of particular places, like churches or altars—or particular times, like Sundays and holy days—or particular things, like bread and wine—is not to advance in spirituality, but to lose in concreteness and richness and actuality.

We have seen that it is not when the individual seeks to please others, but when he tries to be true to his own most sacred, deep convictions, that he is united to, and expresses, what is common to mankind. Similarly, we have recognized that the supreme and ultimate authority on earth for any man is neither the Bible nor the Church, but Conscience—the Vicar of Christ. This sacredness of the individual, the supreme value of the soul, is an

inalienable element in Christianity. In it there comes to full expression a fact which is to be found in all the higher religions, perhaps in all religion of any kind whatever: that spiritual progress depends, not on the mass, but on the individual, not on the institution—on the priest—but on the prophet. A prophet is more than a person of great psychic gifts, or of religious temperament susceptible to the numinous. He is a man of religious insight who lives up to the light that he has. The revelation of God comes to those who obey the command of God. “He that doeth the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” So the responsibility of new understanding of God comes to prophet souls, and with it the responsibility of declaring that new understanding to others. Loyalty to the old and receptiveness to the new—in thought and in conduct, in knowledge, in devotion, and in discipline: by such a tension between authority and freedom, giving to each its due, is reached, by a painful road, the rich reward of a genuine Liberal Catholicism.

Liberal Catholicism values with a passionate devotion the great treasure of Catholic spirituality—the love of God, the love of man for God’s sake, and the beautiful sensitiveness to fine and noble things which can only come from the sort of disinterestedness which is the outcome of worship. And Liberal Catholicism seeks with the same fundamental loyalty the new insight into God’s will which comes through the contact, and even friction, of scientific and historical discovery, and the unexampled peril and opportunity of the mechanical

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social order into which man has stumbled, and at present can neither understand nor control. The Church of Jesus Christ is called to be catholic and free ; it is a great and difficult vocation.







